AN ENQUIRY

INTO THE

PRINCIPLES OF POPULATION,

EXHIBITING A

SYSTEM OF REGULATIONS

FOR

THE POOR;

DESIGNED IMMEDIATELY TO LESSEN, AND FINALLY TO REMOVE, THE EVILS WHICH HAVE HITHERTO PRESSED UPON

THE LABOURING CLASSES OF SOCIETY.

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PREFACE.

AN Author, in soliciting attention to a work on the subject of Population, and the means of removing distress amongst a great body of the people, runs little risk of deceiving himself in respect to the intrinsic importance of his theme. By common consent amongst all classes of statesmen, the poor laws both in England and Ireland, and every inquiry relating to the correction of indigence, are pronounced to be the most vital questions in public economy, demanding the earliest, closest, and most devoted consideration of the legislature. And, indeed, if all the bearings of these questions be traced, this estimation of their paramount importance will neither be found disproportioned to real exigencies, nor to spring exclusively from that direction of public discussion towards popular subjects, which some individuals, who, in the texture of their minds, are more of the past age than the present, occasionally urge.

Do we endeavour to improve the foreign commerce of the country, and to extend every branch of manufacture to high limits; hoping to animate the avocations of industry, to increase revenue, to lessen the public burdens, and to benefit the diversified businesses and professions dependent on public prosperity, the poverty of the people stands opposed as an insuperable barrier. In vain can we look for extended commerce, unless there be adequate means to purchase foreign commodities, or for activity in manufacturing industry, unless there be extensive domestic consumption; and if the indigence of the body of the people precludes this liberal enjoyment of the necessaries of life, all debates and projects respecting commercial treaties, currency, finance, or reduction of taxation, may hold out deceitful promises for the hour, but a brief experience will prove them abortive.

Do we seek to soften the asperity of political discussion, to restore amenity, goodwill, and kindliness of heart, amongst the various gradations of society, to banish the anxious cares and fears of the present and the future, which nightly disturb the pillows of the affluent, and to check in short the portentous dangers which

threaten the existence of our most revered institutions, still the condition of the people starts up in fatal array to mock our efforts. Though poverty exhibits the very type of inadequate sustenance, it is the nutriment on which sedition feeds; and nugatory must be every attempt to render property secure, or to tranquillize the country, unless this mighty cause of disorganization be first eradicated.

Do we fondly hope to improve the morals, to inspire the community with precepts of pure religion, or to stay the course of depravity, vice, and crime, which afflict us at every turn, again, the deep seated distress of the people opposes itself as a fatal impediment to our wishes; and probably the difficulty is even aggravated by the spread of intelligence, causing the unfortunate to feel their misery with deeper acuteness. Anxious and sedulous and sincere as our ministers of religion may be, the evils are too manifold and stretch over too wide a space for their single correction. The feeble extension of their arms can have little efficacy in checking a torrent where a thousand noxious streams, originating from a prolific source, and acquiring progressive accession of volume, are confluent.

Upon every ground, therefore, in which the welfare of the country can be viewed, immediate measures affecting the lower classes of society, and calculated to remove the distress, demand primary consideration. For several years a great portion of each session of Parliament has been occupied in plans for these objects. Emigration, the cultivation of waste lands, the modification of the poor laws in England, the introduction of them into Ireland, have been alternately introduced, and they still continue to consume the largest proportion of time in public discussion. But it does not exactly appear, that in any of those questions material progress has been made, or that the national mind has arrived at a definite or satisfactory line of future proceeding. It is anticipated, that, in the next session of Parliament, these subjects will be revived with fresh ardour, and with superior means for decisive adjustment. Materials are now collecting, and all those, not the least estimable class, who feel deeply for the practical improvement of their country, and look rather for actions in legislation than for words, are full of anxiety for the plans which government may deem it expedient to propose. It is to be hoped, that there being

no violent passions to gratify, no party politics to excite the feelings, these great questions will be examined and decided in an enlightened, deliberate, and philosophical spirit.

Animated with this cheering anticipation, and possessed with such sentiments respecting the spirit of discussion, the Author has undertaken to treat of the whole subject, in an enlarged and consecutive manner. In the following sheets will be found an investigation of all the fundamental principles, which must be selected as the basis for the settlement of these great questions; and it is conceived that few interrogations or inquiries can arise upon any one of the points touching population, poverty, or poor laws, which have not been freely answered, whatever may be the degree of correctness.

These subjects divide themselves into two heads: 1st. To remove the existing redundancy of population. 2dly. To prevent its recurrence. Every person but slightly versed in political economy is well aware, that the latter point is much the more difficult of the two. In its satisfactory solution, a far wider range of information, of comprehensive reasoning, and of discriminating judgment, is required, than in the preceding measure. Hence the compara-

tive indifference, if not contempt, with which the great majority of plans, exhibiting rapid movements in the correction of pauperism, originating with benevolent individuals, but of slender and unphilosophical attainments, are viewed by experienced statesmen. It cannot, indeed, be denied, that, not only in both Houses of Parliament but amongst public writers, there is a disposition to reject, as unsatisfactory and defective, the various proposals for removing distress, which periodically start up. This arises, in many cases, from superior vigour of thought, and from the difficulty to deduce sound conclusions respecting the ulterior fate of the poor, and of the certain prevention of future evils.

The author, therefore, has considered that, though the removal of the existing redundancy of the people is prior in point of actual procedure, it should be taken second in the order of discussion, and that the means of preventing the recurrence of all the evils, incident to poverty, should be first exhibited. This inquiry naturally occupies considerable space; but a solution of those questions immediately pressing, and requiring prompt interference, will be obtained more speedily and satisfac-

torily, when theoretical principles are thoroughly understood.

It is rather to be lamented that on so grave a subject, presenting so slight materials for asperity of any kind, a controversial spirit should be permitted to appear. The lofty benevolence of the theme, one would imagine, should preclude the possibility of any writer descending to contention, or thinking of establishing a fame by peculiarity of views, in place of elevated humanity. In the following pages, it is conceived, there is little controversy; unity of object has been kept steadily in view; and though the general theory is different from that of any preceding writer, it will be cheerfully surrendered, without even one pang of regret, if wiser and more benevolent plans be devised. Though the principles of preceding writers are thus rejected, there is no attempt to impugn their merits or their utility. All knowledge is progressive, and, most of all, the knowledge of political economy, of comparatively recent origin, and depending as it does upon new relations and ever varying circumstances. Who, possessed of the smallest candour, would think of underrating the merit of Dr. Adam Smith, because his work con-

tains errors that subsequent scrutiny and examination have discovered. Who, again, would venture to detract from Mr. Malthus, even though his theory be unsound. He has performed his part; and having stood at the head of philosophical writers upon the most difficult part of political economy, for upwards of thirty years, he may, if fresh circumstances have supplied the means for establishing opposite principles, quietly allow them to prevail, without imagining that his laurels will be in any degree tarnished. It would, indeed, be tasking the human mind to impossibilities, to expect the most gifted individual to exhaust a subject depending for its very aliment upon evanescent and fluctuating materials; and, having attempted to do homage to the merit of preceding and distinguished writers, the author may be the more readily excused, when he ventures to dissent from their doctrine.

Few persons of information for a moment suppose, that there are any empirical means to remove the evils of indigence which at present afflict this country. The case admits not of concealed nostrums, or dazzling rapidity of action; but the discovery of a pervading

principle that will attain the end, even though the process be gradual and slow, is not the less effectual and useful; neither is the merit of this discovery the less, though the means selected for its eduction be simple and familiar. To seize at any time upon an obvious truth, unnoticed and neglected by the mass of mankind, and to shew that it teems with important consequences is justly pronounced to be all the originality which an author of the present day can hope to attain. This principle of investigation has been preserved throughout the following undertaking; and it is desirable that the attention of other writers, directed to this subject, should at all times proceed in a similar spirit.

The more trite positions in political economy, requiring notice, for purposes of perspicuity in a train of reasoning, have been cursorily treated; those views generally have been retained which seem sanctioned by the best and most intelligent writers; and illustrations have been succinctly repeated in one or two instances, in order that subsequent deductions might appear more lucid and satisfactory.

An author, in the present day, has only to ask, is his theory true, certain that, if so,

sooner or later, it will prevail; and if the principles sought to be established in the following pages, are sound in themselves, they cannot but create some change in public economy. A new impetus will be given in many important concerns of life; and our prospects, now deemed dangerous and gloomy, will be considered in the distance safe and exhilarating.

20th November, 1832.

PRINCIPLES OF POPULATION.

CHAPTER I.

PROGRESS OF SOCIETY.

SECTION I.—*Statement of the Subject, and of the Objects proposed in this Enquiry.*

IT has ever been the tendency of the human mind to frame general laws too prematurely, in accounting for the various operations of nature. Though this propensity, in its abstract sense, be the primitive source of all the attainments of man, yet it sometimes is productive of much temporary injury, by giving a wrong direction to our thoughts, and retarding the advancement of true knowledge. In the physical world the evil consequences are not so great as in the moral; because, in the former, the observation of those prominent facts, on which we found our theories, is more within our reach, and can be divested of complicated relations with superior facility. But even here there is much liability to error, if we depend on observation alone. It

has been well observed, that in those sciences in which we are precluded from experiment, the progress in knowledge has been slow and uncertain, while in such as admit of experiment, it has been rapid and steady. In the latter case we can separate details and vary combinations; and whenever we are in doubt in respect to any of the results, constant means are presented for fresh investigation, to satisfy our minds. It is easy, therefore, to account for the comparative backwardness of legislation, and all such sciences, in which we are not only debarred from experiment, from a regard to the welfare of the existing population, but in which observation itself is difficult, and liable to be distorted by a thousand conflicting passions. The actual experience in its proper sense, to which the legislator can refer, in framing comprehensive laws, is much less than is generally supposed. It is not his business to compare the operations of individuals, limited and transient in themselves, but those of entire generations, frequently stretching through a vast period of time; and thus several centuries may elapse before he can complete his classification of general facts, and ascend to his comprehensive induction of ultimate principles. Society is not yet sufficiently advanced for operations of this kind, and it would be well if this fact were attended to in practical legislation; and that a less disposition were shown to assume certain principles as indubitable which have not yet been sufficiently verified.

It is now universally admitted, that the inductive process of reasoning is our only sure guide for the discovery of truth; and three periods have been pointed out, as distinguishing the manner in which the advancement takes place. In the first, every thing seems vague and uncertain; facts are considered as independent of each other; no attempt is made to trace their connections or constant relations; consequently, all reasoning is little more than a species of conjecture, which may be right or wrong, according to accident. In the second, observations have become extended, but they appear complicated, and are not sufficiently numerous or well defined to allow accurate theories to be formed: this is the period for hypotheses, which, if cautiously received, stimulate further research, and prepare the way for the discovery of sound and universal principles. In the third, these principles are securely established; and, as we are now possessed of a comprehensive law, giving the means of explaining and verifying the most complicated series of events, knowledge makes rapid progress. In regard to politics, we are still in the second period, in which we must be content to remain for some time; so soon as the line is once fairly passed, mankind will take astonishing strides, and will soon recover any ground lost in antecedent periods of doubt and perplexity. Because the science of government has hitherto been capricious, it does not follow that it will always continue so. The passions of individuals may be infinitely diversified, and are probably incapable of

being collated for any useful purpose, to form a general rule of conduct; but it is different with nations, where we have to deal with collective character. Let us imagine, for example, how much more extended will be the experience of our descendants, and how much more clear and satisfactory their judgment in many all-important questions, when a few generations shall have passed away, and when the results of the great changes now in progress in England, France, America, and the world at large, have become known. Matters, which seem now only open to interminable discussion, will be set at rest. Mankind will know then, if not finally, at least much better than they know now, what form of government is best, what system of commercial policy should be pursued, and what solution should be given to all those great questions, concerning which they are still at variance. Time alone is required for the evolution of general principles on these subjects; it is, therefore, the more incumbent on us to guard against premature generalization, the evils of which may spread over a wide space, and be the prolific source of other errors. When a principle is once received with apparent unanimity, we proceed to erect our superstructure; and if it does not meet the end designed, we alter it again and again, rarely thinking of examining the foundation. Such an illustration, it is conceived, is applicable to the principle now generally recognized relative to population. It is received as a general law to form the basis for

legislation; and if any error primarily exist, it cannot for a moment be doubted, that the consequences must be most mischievous.

According to this law, the human race has a constant tendency to increase beyond the means of subsistence, and is kept down to its necessary level by some one or other of the various forms of misery, or the fear of misery, prevailing amongst a large portion of mankind. As a necessary consequence, it is sometimes contended, that the condition of the great body of the people in every country being poor and miserable, we can hardly hope to banish from the world the ills of poverty and want. It is probable that some recent writers have shown a disposition to go greater lengths in this gloomy doctrine than was originally intended by its distinguished propounder. But still, the law itself receives an implicit acquiescence, and is considered to be borne out by the test of all ages and of all countries. At present, it not only exercises an extensive influence on legislation, but it has begun to indurate the private relations and charities of life. It seems to have gained strength from every fresh attack, so much so, that all reasoning in opposition is now heard with unwillingness, indeed with a pre-disposition to reject it as unworthy of notice. But the sanction of eminent authority should never preclude the fullest discussion, or the most searching examination. It may induce us to offer our objections with diffidence, and to be more careful in our process of investigation;

but if our grounds of dissent appear cogent in themselves, and not sufficiently examined by those from whom we differ, we should be patiently heard.

It shall, therefore, be our first attempt to show, that it is, at least, premature to assume the doctrine we have described as a general law. We shall proceed in our enquiry, according to the gradations in which Society is generally viewed: First, we shall consider the condition of barbarous nations; Secondly, of agricultural states which have little or no foreign commerce; Thirdly, of commercial and highly civilized states. In all of these we shall endeavour to shew that, confining ourselves strictly to past experience, and avoiding hypothetical reasoning in respect to the future, it has not been proved that there is any tendency in population to increase beyond the means of subsistence. With most reasoners on this subject, the deduction of actual facts, and hypothetical views of the future, have been blended; and there are grounds for believing, that decisions have been pronounced or strengthened respecting the former, while the thoughts rested upon considerations solely affecting the latter. We shall endeavour to separate these views; and as we consider the refutation of the hypothetical argument the more difficult of the two, we shall take it last.

In our endeavours to refute the received theory relative to population, it is not intended to maintain that poverty, and the consequent miseries attendant upon it, can be completely eradicated from the world.

Human life is declared to be a state of discipline, in which the various faculties of mankind are to be exerted, and to accomplish this with effect, there must be some contrast, some example to impel the mass of the people to avoid vice, to practise economy, and to strive with unremitting zeal to ameliorate their condition by successful industry. Were it otherwise ordained, supineness would succeed to activity; and, in place of an animated picture of emulative exertion, with all its alternations of hope and fear pleasingly diversified, we should behold a stagnation of the human faculties. But we shall endeavour to shew, in the subsequent parts of our undertaking, that poverty, and all the evils attendant upon it, may be progressively diminished; and every year made to approach nearer to that state in which they will fall only upon the improvident and the guilty; and thus, ceasing to be deplorable, will serve as a useful example to others, to incite them to practise prudence and virtue.

Section II.

Pressure for Subsistence amongst barbarous Nations.

Writers on Population generally place the inhabitants of New South Wales as about the lowest in the scale of human beings. They are described as ill-

made, and emaciated from the poverty of their living. At times they are obliged to live upon worms, and a few berries obtained from the woods. Sometimes a famine takes place, which cuts off thousands; and their skeletons and the vestiges of their remains may be seen scattered over the country. This state of things is said to have existed ever since we have known that territory; and it is pronounced as a proof that the population is limited, and is, indeed, occasionally checked in the most violent manner by the scanty means of subsistence.

For the sake of contrast let us now turn to the little spot where the English settlement has been established. We find that on a few acres, forming perhaps not the one-thousandth part of the entire territory, food is produced in such abundance as would supply the wants of a population augmented to ten times the number of the primitive inhabitants. In particular seasons the excess of corn is stated to be so great, that it is a subject of complaint amongst the settlers that they cannot procure a market for its disposal, and are obliged to let it perish, from their inability to exchange it for those articles of convenience and gratification which they have been accustomed to consume.

If we confine our attention to these facts before us, it is certainly difficult to understand on what grounds the first state of things is assumed to be perpetual, or considered to exhibit an undeviating tendency in population to increase faster than food can be provided for its support: according to the actual results following

the efforts employed, we are justified in pronouncing the converse of the proposition to be more accurate, and that food has a tendency to increase faster than population. The subsistence amongst the barbarous people surrounding the little colony teeming with abundance cannot be said to be in itself inadequate; there is only a misdirection of the means employed; and the moment a beneficial change takes place—a change natural to the constitution of man—the relative supply of sustenance increases, and the misery disappears. We are bound to consider man as a rational being, having a propensity to better his condition, which is said never to leave him from the cradle to the grave; and the instant his advancement commences the means of subsistence become proportionably more abundant. An increased supply of sustenance, therefore, uniformly precedes an increase of numbers; and if there be not some verbal misunderstanding relative to the terms employed, it does not appear that the received law of population is at all strengthened, or indeed borne out, by illustrations selected from the early stages of society.

It is freely granted, that amongst barbarous people great misery will be endured, and that at times many of the inhabitants may die from want; but the question is, to what cause are these evils attributable? In every subject it is well known that two events may, without sufficient reason, be considered inseparably connected as cause and effect, the connexion being in fact only incidental. It is important to separate causes from

accessories; and it is not difficult to shew that the primary causes which give abundance of food in every country are, the acquisition of knowledge, the security of property, the exertion of industry, and good government. On the other hand, when these are wanting, there must be poverty, totally independent of the extent or fertility of the land; and wherever there is poverty, population will appear to press against the means of subsistence. The want, therefore, of knowledge and of a proper system of government is the true cause of the misery conspicuous amongst barbarous nations: the inadequacy of the supply of food is merely an accompanying circumstance; it runs parallel with the predominating cause—is in constant association with that cause; but it cannot be selected as the first in the order of the sequence, or as the proper origin of the misery. The deficiency of sustenance is merely an evil which, in common with a great number of others, may be attributed to the same source. Some of these evils are more constant in their operation than others; and when one is universally present, we look upon it sometimes as an operating cause, and not as a concomitant. The alleged deficiency of sustenance is precisely in this predicament: it will vary as the operating causes vary; recede or advance, diminish or extend, according to the nature and comparative intensity of their operation. Look which way we will, the degree of poverty and misery in the first conditions of society is proportioned to the state of knowledge, the insecurity of property, and bad govern-

ment; and never to the comparative fertility of the land, or the number of people who may inhabit an extensive territory. Let those first elements requisite for the advancement of man be established, and the population will increase, and the pressure of want at once disappear; but all efforts to extend territory, or to lessen the inhabitants with a view to improve their condition will be in vain, unless knowledge, or some approach to the essential elements we have described, be first introduced. Let the territory of New Holland be immeasurably enlarged, or let the natives be reduced one-half, and in all probability it will make no difference in their condition: but it ought to do so, if the received doctrine respecting population were correct. On the other hand, the smallest symptom of a primary cause such as has been stated would immediately change the aspect of society, and create plenty; and throughout all stages of subsequent advancement, it will draw in its train the same beneficial effects.

This view of the question will appear more clear by considering the progress of nations emerging from a savage state. The first stage, where men live upon the fruits and herbs that present themselves spontaneously, and the wild animals which they catch in the chase, is extremely precarious, and cannot admit of great numbers of people. The change from this to the pastoral state will depend upon the comparative number of wild animals that can be found upon a given space, and their susceptibility of being tamed.

When the animals are ferocious, scanty in number, or widely scattered, the inhabitants will be doomed to a long continuance, probably for ever, in the most repulsive states of society. When, on the other hand, animals are not difficult to procure, and easily tamed, the rise to the pastoral state is comparatively rapid. It must sometimes happen, that more animals are taken in the chase than will suffice for one meal, or for one day, and endeavours will be made to preserve them for future wants. In this case their utility must be observed; efforts will be made to tame them, and they will be gradually brought to afford a continual supply to their owners, so as to relieve them from the precariousness of the chase. We have here the first fruits of the acquisition of knowledge, or of that superiority of man which enables him to put all that is around him in requisition for his use, and to control the largest and the strongest to do him service. No sooner are the first inventive and reasoning powers developed than society improves, and for a long period of time distress disappears; a larger number of persons in this second state can be supported upon the same extent of territory; the animals become more numerous by being carefully managed; the rights of property, though probably an instinctive passion, become better appreciated; and thus, from the reciprocal action of a number of contemporaneous causes, a higher state of society is attained.

This seems to have been the natural progress in all parts now distinguished for civilization: certain favour-

able circumstances unquestionably appear requisite, and we should therefore be disposed to doubt the likelihood of all savage nations progressively passing through the states of the hunter, the shepherd, and the cultivator. In all probability, the savage life now found in the world is a degeneration from the pastoral: by some accident or untoward event men may have been driven from their flocks and herds, and in an unfriendly region, not having animals within their reach, they have gradually fallen to a lower condition. Had they been acquainted with agriculture, they might have retained their acquirements, and have found means for procuring the implements for cultivation; but being ignorant of that art, and having no materials for attaining the pastoral state, they became savages from necessity.

Invention is stimulated by this necessity, and though it is not likely that the savages, in countries like New Holland, will ever make efforts to civilize themselves; yet some writers have maintained that were an increase of people from any cause suddenly to take place, it would be the most likely mode to push them forward, by impelling them to employ some forethought in procuring their food. But if there be doubt in respect to this beneficial operation in the lowest stages of society, few will dispute that it works with powerful efficacy, when the pastoral state is established, and the rights of property are secured.

For a long period the increase of population is followed by an increase of food; but it is wisely

ordered that this state of society should not continue. Poverty may be removed for a long time, but it will eventually take place unless further exertions be made. The herdsman has not a supply of grass for the entire of his cattle during the year; he can only provide for the most valuable of them during the winter, leaving the rest to support themselves by the scanty herbage which can be procured in that inclement season. In tropical regions corresponding difficulties ensue from excessive droughts, and thus a considerable part of the cattle perishing at times, renders the shepherd life precarious. In time a pressure for subsistence will be felt, and distress will appear; but still this distress and apparent tendency of population to outstrip subsistence, will be a concomitant circumstance, ascribable to the backward knowledge and imperfect government. It will disappear so soon as further security of property and higher mental acquirements arise. When the tribes of the pastoral nations arrive at any land of great fertility, they will be anxious to settle themselves; they will seek to guard against hostile incursions; and they will endeavour to establish a vigilant form of government. Succeeding in these ends, and enjoying greater security, they will have more leisure and will devote some of their time to various arts. Settled in the same place for a considerable period, they will observe the progress of vegetation; they will discover the means to avail themselves of its assistance to protract their residence in a secure and agreeable district; and, in one word,

they will commence to till the land. Here again is a higher state of society created, strictly ascribable to the developement of those primary elements, knowledge, security, and industry, combining with each other, and gradually acting with accelerated force in accomplishing the desired end. We reach thus the agricultural state, where for a long period the pressure for food is unfelt and unthought of. It seems, therefore, that under ordinary circumstances these early stages of society exhibit a uniform tendency in the human race to improve its condition, and it is not thwarted in that design by any difficulty to procure subsistence, whenever the incentives natural to man manifest themselves with proper force.

It does not appear that there are any just exceptions to this rule. The infanticide of Otaheite, which is frequently adduced as exhibiting a striking proof of the necessity of men to keep down their numbers to the supply of food, hardly bears out the construction that is put upon it. It is the chiefs and higher classes of society who are guilty of this crime; it is not these who would have the fear of want before them; it would rather be, as it is in all other countries, the lowest description of people: the barbarous custom therefore should be ascribed to the profligacy of the manners, and the desire to enjoy a long continuance of pleasures, and not to any forethought that population might soon outstrip the capabilities of the island to produce hogs and bread-fruit. Whether or not society could continue in-

creasing in Otaheite is another question, and belongs to the second branch of the subject; it is sufficient to observe that the state of the population is just what would be imagined on our referring to the state of knowledge and the nature of the government.

On the other hand, in respect to some countries in which there is lavish abundance of food, without the people in the least degree breeding up to the supply, the explanations of Mr. Malthus are not satisfactory. In Guiana and that large district in South America, bordering on the Oronoco, there is a scanty population, nearly in the first stages of nature, which seems, according to tradition, to have remained for ages in the same relative position, though treated with extreme kindness by the nations which have settlements on that coast, in order to use them as a protection against the African slaves. Their wants are supplied with the greatest ease; the rivers yield a supply of fish; vegetation is luxuriant beyond example; the banana and the cassava root have spread in every direction; and they give such abundance that it is probable the majority of the inhabitants have never known what hunger is without being aware that it proceeded from their own indolence, and could be satiated were they sufficiently to rouse themselves to proceed to the nearest river or valley.

Section III.

Pressure for Subsistence amongst Agricultural States, possessing little external Commerce.

The agricultural state has frequently been described as the most prosperous condition of man. There seems an abundance of that description of property which is most coveted, and in the healthy pursuits of rural industry severe privations are unknown. But unless mankind continued to live in the rudest state, and satisfied with the fewest wants, this condition must soon reach its limits, and poverty amongst a portion of the people at length appear. The distinction of ranks extends as society advances: some articles distinct from sustenance will require to be purchased by the better classes, and these must be paid for out of the funds which otherwise would be applied to the support of the agricultural labourers. Amongst this latter class, after a certain limit is passed, there will be increased difficulty in procuring employment: the strict appropriation of the land follows the introduction of agriculture; the labourers, therefore, are constrained to offer their services for money; and if there be little or no foreign commerce affording employment, in case they cannot procure it in cultivating the land, they will be unable to purchase subsistence. But still this state of things does not prove that there

is any tendency in the population to outstrip the means of subsistence. The distress amongst the labourers is an accompanying effect of one of the primary causes of social retardation, which, if permitted to exist, is certain to draw evils in its train. It is the misdirection of industry which causes the distress; let foreign commerce be introduced; let towns arise where new employments present ample resources for the exertions of the redundant population, and the difficulties will be removed. Foreign commerce seems necessary to every people when once the distinctions of rank are fully established, and the higher classes, possessing leisure, and disbanding idle and unproductive retainers, commence to cultivate a refinement of manners. It is by commerce that those retainers can be employed; by its means the field is widened for them; the interchange of the productions of the labour of one country with those of the labour of other countries extends the range of general employment, calls new commodities into existence, and gives eventually more subsistence to the people. When every country is left at liberty to produce those commodities for which it is best calculated, and which it produces in the greatest abundance, the same quantity of labour, from the international adjustment of commerce, will produce a greater quantity of commodities; and therefore there will be a larger portion for each inhabitant. If we continue to view man as a rational being, in every stage desirous of improving his condition, we must admit the tendency

to emerge from the rude agricultural state to one of greater refinement; and the moment this takes place, the apparent redundancy of people disappears. Commerce creates a proper and beneficial division of labour, the result of which diffuses itself in all parts, and settles the people in those particular places and pursuits which are best adapted to their energies and faculties.

The history of nations exhibits these recurring changes, evincing that the rise or fall of prosperity is precisely in unison with the particular direction of industry. China has been selected as furnishing a decisive proof of the tendency of population to increase beyond the means of subsistence. This country, it is said, possesses an excellent soil, is advantageously situated in the warmest parts of the temperate zone, and is well watered by a number of lakes, rivers, and canals; yet, notwithstanding these advantages, such is the distress amongst the people for food, that parents sell their daughters for a trifle, and frequently destroy or expose their infants. Famine too, at times, steps in with stern severity, and sweeps off incredible numbers.

It is freely admitted that China presents the strongest case in favour of the doctrine under examination; but even here a few considerations will tend to weaken the predominant impression. In the first place, marriage forms part of the religion of the country; extraordinary encouragements are held out to it, and from time to time constant admonitions to all classes appear from those in authority to increase and multiply as the great end

of the social system: under such circumstances, to remain single is held disreputable, and a father feels guilty of impropriety, unless he is able to settle his children in marriage. In the second place, it does not appear that there is any law of primogeniture in China; the possessions of every father are equally distributed amongst his sons: this naturally causes a great subdivision of property, which has in itself not only a strong tendency to promote population, but which, carried to an extreme, depresses the reward of labour, and keeps the great body of the people in indigence. In the third place, while agriculture is encouraged with every description of pomp, esteem, and almost veneration, foreign commerce is contemned, and is by the laws prohibited. These causes combined are quite sufficient to account for the anomalous condition of the Chinese population: we find, on the one hand, most extraordinary encouragements given to increase it; and, on the other hand, almost equal pains taken to prevent beneficial employments, which must spring up if industry were unrestrained and directed to its legitimate channels: it is not, therefore, difficult to account for the infanticide and general redundancy of the people. We prceive, as in all other cases, that the state of knowledge, and the political institutions, produce the very effects we should anticipate. The institutions are contradictory and vicious, and poverty amongst a large portion of the people necessarily appears, running parallel as an accompanying circumstance with the primary causes.

The other examples, which are sometimes quoted, appear equally as capable of explanation as China.

It is said that the great migrations and movements of nations which have taken place throughout the world, have been occasioned by population increasing faster than food. It was this which caused the constant conflicts of the shepherds of Asia, and the northern nations to overrun the Roman Empire of the West: it was this also which caused Greece to send out numerous colonies, these again forming fresh migrations to parts still more distant.

That these movements prove a great increase of people no person can dispute; but it is quite possible that some exaggeration may take place in respect to the motive assigned. The desire of a more agreeable residence, the attractions of a more alluring climate, the love of change, and the predatory habits of warfare of the northern nations, may account for their migrations. The colonies sent out by civilized Greece may also be explained without assuming a positive deficiency of food. There might be a greater difficulty among the freemen of procuring settlements in land, and they might prefer endeavouring to obtain this necessary adjunct to personal consideration in distant parts. But that there was no positive distress or extreme difficulty of procuring subsistence in both these cases would appear manifest from the unabated continuance of slavery. Had population really outstripped the means of subsistence, this condition of society would have previously terminated, as the

masters would have sought voluntary services; knowing that it would be cheaper to let the slaves support themselves than to continue the system of providing them with food.

Even in the republic of Aristotle, which frequently attracts attention as elucidative of the opinions of the ancients upon these subjects, it does not appear that the permission to check the increase of population arose from a fear of its going beyond the supply of food. It was because a certain equality of property was considered indispensable; and, as property at that time consisted of land, it was considered that any increase of the people might be fatal to this system of liberty: to keep up therefore a stated number of freemen forms part of the regulations of the republic, so that the ideal equality might be strictly preserved.

Whether we take the ancient or the modern world, man can never be considered a stationary being. Many deplorable evils strike us in the history of nations of which distresses amongst the lower classes of society seem the most prominent. But if we take a wide span from century to century, we can explain past difficulties, and can discover no uncontrollable laws that restrain advancement. The increase or decrease of a people, their happiness or misery, depend not upon such gross considerations as soil or territory. Let us survey the countries which were once populous and happy, but which now are sunk to the lowest state of degradation. In the Ottoman

empire, where magnificent cities flourished, there are now only a few huts, and straggling inhabitants, indigent, slothful, and depraved, wander through entire provinces, which at one time gave subsistence to millions. According to the received doctrine of population, the misery in those places would be ascribed to the pressure for subsistence or the operation of a natural law; and yet, if there be meaning in language, we know how contrary is the actual cause. The supply of subsistence and of all the articles of life, diffusing comfort, rises or falls according to a people's deserts. It was the security of property and good government which enabled Greece, with her little territory, to extend her power and her people amongst remote regions. It is the insecurity of property and bad government which have produced the mighty change, and which expose the proud Turk to contempt and insult from every passing stranger. Mankind are inclined to industry if they can reap its fruits; but no one wishes to sow if the harvest be extorted from him by plunder, fraud, or the capricious exactions of tyranny. The just inference is, that both population and food are restrained by vicious institutions, and that under a wise ordination of things both augment with rapidity, food appearing the precursor, from its being the means by which property is first accumulated.

The peopling of America is a striking illustration of this principle. Were any individual to have reflected upon the received doctrine of population at

the time emigration took place to the Spanish provinces and to the United States, he must have pronounced, from the comparative proportions of food and people, that the ratio of increase in both territories would have been the same. The fertility of the land of Spanish America is quite equal, probably superior, to that of the northern territory; it is fully as extensive, and were the facility of procuring sustenance the chief consideration in determining the increase of numbers, the ratio of increase here should be as great as in the United States: yet what is the fact? the one doubles itself in twenty-five years, the other exhibits an increase short of many parts of Europe. It is not, therefore, the fertility of the land or the intrinsic ease with which persons can provide themselves with sustenance that determines the rate of increase: it is far different causes, more flattering to the intellectual and moral character of man. Let benefits corresponding to those possessed by the United States be established in Spanish America, and the same results in respect to population will follow. In all colonies, therefore, which are analogous to the agricultural states of Society, we perceive a disposition of mankind to advance in their condition if properly governed, and, associated with that cause, a tendency to produce more food than is required for the actual population.

Section IV.

Pressure for Subsistence amongst Commercial States.

When the argument respecting redundancy of population is applied to nations which possess extensive foreign commerce, it is worthy of remark, that the phraseology is changed. In the early stages of society the terms are,—population has a tendency to increase faster than food; but in advanced civilized states, the terms are,—population has a tendency to increase faster than the funds devoted to the support of industry. It is apparent that, in this latter case, the same proposition would apply to any other article as well as to food. If we beheld a man scantily clothed, we might, with equal propriety, say that there was a tendency in population to increase faster than woollen cloth, as that there was a tendency to increase faster than food. The first proposition, we are inclined to think, our manufacturers, now overburthened with stocks difficult of sale, would be disposed to deny.

The circumstances which govern the supply of funds devoted to industry, we shall presently investigate; in the mean time a few remarks may be necessary to shew that, viewing the past and present, there is no proof that population in the United Kingdom has a tendency to increase faster than sub-

sistence. At present, it is notorious that more food is raised in Ireland, and in other parts, where the distress is greatest, than is required for the subsistence of the people. At the time that the famine existed in that country, in the year 1826, when potatoes and articles of the lowest description of sustenance were conveyed to the distressed districts; wheat, and articles of a superior description of sustenance, were conveyed down the river Shannon for exportation. In this state of things, the language generally used respecting the inadequacy of subsistence is inconsistent and contradictory. Great distress may indubitably exist; but that distress must be traced to other causes than a tendency of the people to outstrip the means of subsistence. A redundant population, proceeding from the scantiness or incapability of the land to afford sustenance, is one thing; a redundant population proceeding from unequal distribution of wealth, is another. If the argument be, that hitherto the organization of industry, in most commercial countries, has been such, that great distress prevails, it is correct; but no such conclusion can be formed, if we drop this consideration of industry, and refer to population and subsistence alone. Of course, no more food will be brought into existence than is really required; it should be considered precisely as any other commodity; a given quantity will be produced whenever it is wanted; and, indeed, to act otherwise, would be to waste it, or to employ it for no definite purpose. It is clear, therefore, it will always

be adjusted to population, and, according to past experience, there is nothing to induce us to believe that it will not start off with quite as great rapidity as population, whenever industry gives a great impetus to the latter to increase.

In point of fact, as we advance towards high civilization, the tendency of food to increase faster than population becomes more conspicuous; from the well known principle, that in every manufacture, or business, there is a tendency amongst producers to raise the supply beyond the demand. Were food a durable article, easily warehoused, and were the trade conducted on the same principles as in other commodities, we should just behold the same glut, or excess of supply, as is now witnessed in respect to cottons in South America. The excess, indeed, is sometimes actually seen in the north of Europe, where corn constitutes an important export, and where, contrary to the opinion of many writers, it seems to possess no peculiar tendency to create a market for itself.

The causes which regulate a proper adjustment of the supply to the demand, and which distribute advantageously to all classes the dispensations which Nature has at her command—or, in other words, wealth, in all its various forms—strictly depend, in the far advanced state of Great Britain, on the same principles as in the most barbarous regions. It is still knowledge, security, industry, and good government, which are required to eradicate dis-

tress; more refined, perhaps, in their developement, but in primary characteristics essentially the same. Proud as we are of our achievements, and the station this country has attained amongst the nations of the world, we are yet but novices in these great points, on which the ultimate advancement of the species depends. One element, industry, from some fortuitous combination of circumstances, we possess far beyond other nations; it is now interwoven with our habits, and on it our future hopes are generally fixed. Another, security of property, we possess also; but still capable of improvement in more branches of business, and to a greater extent, than is generally suspected. In knowledge, we have just advanced so far as to perceive, at the threshold of the temple, the glories contained within. But in government, as already has been hinted, we are much in arrear. We may possess that ruder description of authority which contents itself with negative duties, which can support armies, punish offenders, negotiate with foreign countries, and perform the ordinary functions of government: but in regard to that philosophical legislation which can stretch out in advance of the age, and with prophetic skill frame institutions, to expand the character, and promote the happiness, of the great bulk of the people, we should preserve a discreet silence.

CHAPTER II.

STATE OF POPULATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

SECTION I.—*Causes of Redundancy.*

WHEN industry first begins to develope itself, there are hardly any distinctions of rank. The labourer provides his own tools, and is not dependent upon any person for inducing him to labour; but by degrees the various physical powers and talents with which men are endowed fit them for different occupations, and a regard to mutual convenience leads them to establish a division of employments. By these means tasks are accomplished that could not otherwise be undertaken unless at the mandates of a despotic prince, which are unsuited to the calm pursuits of industry. The social system is peculiar to man; in most occupations some co-operation is required; and each follows that particular branch in which he is most likely to excel. Even in the early period of hunting one prepares the bows and arrows, another hunts, another prepares the food, and a fourth provides the clothing. As society advances and the rights of property are established, an inequality in the distribution of food, tools, or clothing, is introduced

from a cause that seems fatal to all systems of equality in government: some persons being more thrifty and frugal than others, and accumulating the fruits of their labour. From this passion strengthening by use, added to the desire of bequeathing property to those on whom the affections rest, the accumulated labour has a tendency to increase in itself, and it constitutes the first commencement of capital. The hunter will seek to possess bows and arrows to assist him in the pursuit of his game, and if he possess not these himself he will be disposed to part with a portion of his earnings, or the animals which he kills, to some thrifty persons possessed of these articles, who are willing to make the exchange, and who stand in the situation of capitalists.

In the next stage of society the division of employment and the distinctions of rank are carried to a greater extent. An augmented number of implements for the purpose of labour will be required; better clothing will be introduced; and other improvements, which will give rise to a greater range of accumulated or antecedent labour. In every subsequent stage this inequality of property will become more and more conspicuous. In time all the land will be appropriated, the labourer will require permission to select his habitation, and besides what may be deemed circulating capital, such as food and clothing, being provided for him, fixed capital, or the providing of a proper house, will be required before any extensive description of work can be conducted.

There will then, in short, be established in the social system the distinct relations of master and servant.

It will soon be found that with every new subdivision of labour a greater quantity of work is performed, while there is also an increased demand for better machines and processes for facilitating the general industry. The accumulation of this capital enables work to be executed in a better manner than could be executed if the labourers were left to themselves. By a concentration of means directed to a particular end, it enables articles to be sold cheaper, and it also gives a certainty to every person in want of a particular article that he can find it at any given time or place. These advantages are so great, that if we run over the various employments in any advanced country, it will be found that there are very few that are not carried on by a master, on the one hand, who supplies the capital, and by workmen on the other, who perform stated services. By degrees we see the great capitalists arise, possessed of large mills for the spinning of cotton, of silk, of woollens, and linens; while, forming a distinct society, we behold the weaver quite dependent on a master manufacturer willing to employ him. The same division of employment takes place in all other pursuits. The builder, carpenter, painter, glazier, and all such trades, in a country like England, are divided into two distinct classes, the master and the workman. The same is now witnessed in agriculture. The time is long since passed when the labourer resided

in the same house with the farmer, and, considering himself part of the family, had his heart in the soil, and deemed his lot inseparably interwoven with that of his master. The farmers now constitute quite a distinct class: and in every country village, the baker, the butcher, the fishmonger, and every employment we could name, exhibit the distinction of master and workman. Even the barber, which formerly persons pursued on their own calling, must now be considered as divided into the two ranks described, some species of capital in fitting up a shop and other indispensable articles being required.

In this state of things it must be apparent that the labourers are completely dependent upon their employers. It is not in their power to create industry, or to labour in any independent pursuit with a reasonable chance of bettering their condition. They cannot take their implements in hand and proceed to cultivate what land they please; they cannot possess themselves of a loom and attempt to work to an extent indefinite but by their own option; they are obliged to seek out a master willing to employ them, and if that master cannot be found they must sink into penury.

There is no intention to censure this organization of society; the object is simply to point out the position in which the labourers stand, and that their comfort depends upon the number and capabilities of their employers to supply work.

It is a mistake to consider these capabilities as

solely consisting of capital in the ordinary sense of the word. In an advanced state of society the rearing and education of persons belonging to that class of society with whom employment originates is a serious undertaking. Skill, knowledge of business, and many indispensable qualifications are necessary which only can be acquired by long practice and sedulous attention. The attainments of such an individual may be viewed as a species of capital in which is sunk the expenditure of probably more than twenty years. It is, in fact, frequently of more importance than actual money, and judicious parents are never disposed to stint preparatory disbursements; knowing well that they best aid their sons in winning their way to affluence.

In regard to the community this species of immaterial capital enables production to be more widely extended, and new views of the arts to be struck out which otherwise might never have originated. But the advantage is not confined to the additional skill, it gives rise to credit, which supposes competence in the person who borrows and a reliance on his qualifications to perform the ends required of him. The advantages of credit in every commercial country are too obvious to require illustration. Though it does not virtually constitute capital, it performs all its analogous functions, and enables a given portion of the actual money of the country to produce more extended effects. It has the power of substituting a cheap medium of exchange for one that is expensive;

and it presents a constant resource to aspiring industry to exert itself wherever there is a reasonable prospect of success. In point of fact the skill, the knowledge, and the attainments, of those persons who may be classed as manufacturers or master producers are of more importance to a nation than the quantity of capital actually accumulated. They can always make credit supply the place of capital, until the savings of labour have created a clear fund for substantial investment. Numerous instances occur of Englishmen and Scotchmen going to Ireland without possessing a shilling, and solely by means of their attainments, their business habits, and their knowledge of adopting means to particular ends, succeeding in many branches of industry where success by the native inhabitants had been pronounced impracticable. In the United States of America also a number of enterprising cultivators may occasionally be seen without any accumulation of capital, probably without even ordinary tools, settling themselves in the back lands, and solely by means of their practical knowledge converting a sterile wilderness into a fruitful abode, displaying many of the comforts and conveniences of life. It is, therefore, upon the number of this class, or upon the middle order of society, that the prosperity of the state and the comparative comfort of the labouring population depends.

Now let us suppose at any given period that the various classes of society are properly adjusted to each other; that the masters are just competent in

number to give employment to the labourers; and that none of the latter able to work need remain idle. In this case the society will be prosperous and happy. Let a generation now elapse, and let the masters increase in a certain ratio, restrained by many prudential considerations, the fear of losing their rank in society, of having their comforts abridged, or of leaving their offspring unprovided for at their death; on the other hand let the labourers be influenced by no such considerations, be thoughtless of consequences, and stimulated to increase their numbers by national institutions; it is obvious that at the termination of this period the proportions between the two classes will be disarranged, there will be more labourers than masters to employ them, and those supernumerary labourers having no resource must become paupers.

Such is the simple cause of the redundant population which has so long been the subject of keen discussion and controversy in this country. The extent and fertility of the land have nothing to do with the matter: the same effects would in all probability exist—that is, there would be the same relative poverty, trivially modified by commercial regulations respecting the importations of corn—were several counties added to the kingdom, or were all parts of the land as fertile as the vale of Bedfordshire. It is the want of a due proportion of the middle classes of society which causes the existing distress. It is not the deficiency of capital in its ordinary sense;

because we have shewn that industry chiefly depends upon the skill or knowledge which attaches personally to the manufacturers or master producers; and unless these are in proper relative numbers to the labourers, a large body of the latter must be destitute of work. Let us suppose, for example, that at the commencement of the last war there were one hundred manufacturers giving employment to one thousand labourers, and that at the present time the former have exactly doubled, while the labourers have increased to two thousand three hundred; in this case there will be a redundancy of three hundred men, who, helpless in themselves, from the mode in which industry originates, and from the length to which the divisions of employment have been carried, all requiring extensive credit and resources, will be thrown upon the parish.

This solution of the great question of pauperism will, it is conceived, be found satisfactory throughout our analysis; and it opens many important considerations to our view. So far is there from being any approach to correctness in the customary explanations relative to the prosperity or adversity of nations, that we are almost justified in maintaining a doctrine directly opposite,—that the greater the fertility of the land the greater is the chance of extreme poverty appearing with comparatively a scanty population. In those countries which teem with lavish abundance the inhabitants are indolent, and allow century to roll over century without exhibiting any material advance-

ment. Long seated habits are rarely overturned; they hang about a nation like the primitive roots of language, which may be changed or modified by the influence of time, but which still retain for all essential purposes their original character, unsusceptible of subversion. A country like Spain, where the middle classes who should give the play to industry are proud, ignorant, and inactive, will exhibit land uncultivated, languishing commerce, and a limited population, disorganized by the extremes of poverty. A country like the North of England, where exertion never slumbers, and where the attainments of the middle classes yield resources to seize upon every opening which the changes of the commercial world are constantly unfolding, will advance with unabated prosperity, and will support numberless cities teeming with people, without any relative increase of poverty.

According to this principle also it is easy to explain the inequality of the distress existing in various parts of the United Kingdom. Wherever the lower orders have greatly increased, unrestrained by prudential considerations; where the division of master and servant has been carried to extreme limits, depriving the labourer of any resource of his own; and where there are few pursuits in which a constant opportunity presents itself for the middle classes to engage; the evils of pauperism must be great. In the South of England, where agriculture principally prevails, and where there are few manufactures, the poor rates

are extremely heavy; the labourers see no other description of work to which they can turn their attention, and, having no resource, they fall upon the parish. The distress will be greater in those districts in which the line of demarcation between the farmer and the labourer is most conspicuous. In the eastern counties, where the system of cultivation pursued is of a superior description, from the skill and capital possessed by the farmers, who form a class quite distinct from the labourers, the comparative redundancy of population is greater than in the western counties, where the farms are not so extensive, and where the farmers and their labourers approach in their manners and customs nearer to each other. Where manufactures are established a wider field presents itself for employment, and the more extended the range of manufactures the less likelihood is there in ordinary times for severe distress to arise: a resource of some kind or other generally presents itself, and the pressure must be of considerable duration before it positively reduces large bodies of the workmen to indigence. The facility of communication between all parts of the empire has a tendency to equalize the distress by the competition of unemployed labourers, who leave their own homes under the hope of procuring employment in more prosperous districts. But still in all parts it is to be feared that there is no proportion between the employers and the employed. For almost an indefinite period of time the middle classes have abstained from premature marriages from a desire to

uphold their rank in society; on the other hand, the labourers have continued to increase their numbers, through every period of prosperity and adversity alike.

At first view it would seem, from the great competition in all pursuits, and the difficulty of bringing up a family in a respectable manner, that there is a redundancy in the middle as well as in the lower classes in life. The lawyer, the physician, and the artist, meet on every side increasing competitors, without being gratified with the least semblance of an increase of general business. It is the same in all commercial pursuits; the shopkeeper appears to be gradually retrograding in his condition; and in many of the more common mercantile vocations, such as clerks, a vacancy is no sooner known to occur than there are a hundred applicants; indeed, with respect to all persons engaged in productive industry, who have not accumulated considerable capital, there is more than a decided approach to deterioration in their condition, there is a positive commencement of it, awakening gloomy anticipations of the future. It may therefore be considered that there is quite as great a redundancy in this class as amongst the common labourers; but it is easy to perceive that this redundancy is not of their own creation, but arises from their place being usurped by others a step below them in life.

When great numbers of labourers are out of employment, many of them must observe that in that

description of labour, just one step above ordinary work, a little higher wages are given. Some, therefore, will offer their services on lower terms in order to supplant those above them, and the employers, from a regard to their own interest, will accept their proposal. There is thus a keenness of competition amongst these classes of labourers, which ends in a permanent reduction of wages. Those supplanted, in their turn see others just one step above them, receiving superior remuneration; they make an effort to participate in this labour, by offering their services at a lower rate; and the same motive upon the part of their employers equally operating here, secures their engagement. Another deterioration in the condition of the people ensues; and if we go through the entire series we shall find the same principle at work, placing all who have to live by industry at a great disadvantage, compared to the unproductive classes who live on revenue. There is, therefore, no redundancy brought about by themselves in the middle classes. So far is this from being the case at the present time, and probably for a few years past, that if we examine into the condition and practices of life of the middle classes, who are not in affluent circumstances, we shall find that there is a positive diminution in their numbers; or, in other words, from their abstaining from marriage, the deaths are greater than the births. This would form a most useful statistical inquiry if officially undertaken; but in the absence of precise information, we

run little risk in assenting to the accuracy of the position, if we only cursorily attend to the habits of those persons, well educated, but who have no resource to depend upon save their personal exertions; prudential considerations operate on them with peculiar force; and were others not to supplant them in their vocations, the seeming redundancy would soon disappear.

It will, besides, be recollected that the question does not merely relate to the rate of increase amongst the middle classes, but to the inferiority of that increase compared with the labourers. It is not enough to view the number of children actually reared in families in the two classes in order to judge of their comparative rates of increase: it is necessary to consider the number of bachelors in each, because it is the complete abstinence from marriage, and not its postponement only, by many of the middle classes, which causes their collective numbers, in a given period, to fall relatively short of the other class. Probably from the superior care, greater cleanliness, and better living in families of the better classes, more children are actually reared than in the lower orders, but this by no means exhibits a fair average in the aggregate increase of the general body. In the one case all might be married; in the other assuredly there would be many bachelors. Amongst a society, for instance, of seventy persons in London, forming a public mercantile body, according to information recently procured, there were twenty-five unmarried, and the number of children belonging to the entire was two

hundred and thirty. Had the clerks of these persons been included, the bachelors would have been more numerous than the married. Amongst a corresponding number of labourers, in some degree dependent upon the former, the married were fifty-four and the children two hundred and ninety-eight. With English or Irish agricultural labourers the disproportion would have been still greater, and it is probable the children would have amounted to three hundred and fifty. In every country village, and indeed, wherever we go, poor children abound; and, according to the last census, districts chiefly inhabited by the lower orders appeared uniformly the most populous, not only from greater density of congregation, but from larger aggregate families.

With such materials it is difficult to effect a change. Though production varies according to the extent of immaterial capital employed, yet it is not probable, nor perhaps possible, that persons now possessing every requisite of skill, assiduity, business habits, and all those qualifications which procure credit with facility, could enter into any undertaking with a reasonable prospect of success. In consequence of competition, and the declining remuneration for labour in all departments, resulting from the redundancy in the lowest class of workmen, there is a falling off of trade in every branch, the very rumour of which must deter any new aspirant, no matter how qualified he may be, from entering into business. Every prospect seems discouraging, and this not only

operates in respect to his own views and hopes, but it deters bankers and passive capitalists from giving credit. Whenever the profit in large manufacturing concerns is reduced to little above the current rate of interest, it is a bad symptom; it evinces that the immaterial part of capital, or that consisting of skill and knowledge, is badly rewarded; it therefore confines the trade to those who have already large means embarked, and excludes new candidates whose chief or sole resource is their skill, and whose real gain will be the difference between the gross profit and the current rate of interest.

In an ordinary state of society, the difficulties of competition do not increase with increase of population; the same relative means of employment, or diversity of pursuits, continue unchanged: the ratio of increase may be very high, but the pursuits increase in precisely the same proportion. If, for example, the rate of increase in a given period is ten per cent., and say in any town ten hatters have one added to their number, making eleven, there will be no diminution of business to each hatter, because a corresponding increase will have taken place in all other branches of business, which will give employment to the additional person introduced. But if society be in a declining state, from the evils caused by redundant labourers injuring those above them in the manner described, there is relatively a positive diminution of trade, and hence the middle classes, who give the play to industry, have no

materials, no ground upon which they can rest their lever to bring about a beneficial change. Step by step they themselves approach the condition of paupers, progressively rendering amendment more difficult. When the stagnation is accidental, and of limited duration, things have a tendency to rectify themselves; but it is evident, that if the stagnation last for a considerable period, it must proceed with accelerated force, until at last it will baffle every remedy.

What the result in this country would have been, in case the middle classes of society, for a couple of generations, had increased in the same ratio as the labourers, it is perhaps difficult to say. It would seem as if no tendency to redundancy of population would have occurred; because, then the various relations and classes in life, notwithstanding the increase of numbers, would have remained unchanged. In ten millions of people there might be, for example, one million manufacturers and traders, one million professional men and others, and eight millions labourers: if these be doubled, making two of the former respectively, and sixteen of the latter, it would not appear that the business of any would be reduced, or that any distress would be experienced from increase of numbers. It is the latter class, the labourers, increasing out of all proportion, which has occasioned the evils, because the consequence, traced through every ramification, has been, to place those who produce at a relative disadvantage to those who

consume, and thus to lessen the proper rewards of industry.

There are only two circumstances which can be considered to militate against this conclusion; these are the increase of taxation and the cultivation of inferior soils. With regard to the first, it is generally admitted amongst the most intelligent persons that it has operated in a very trifling degree in producing distress. In the year 1792, throughout the United Kingdom, the taxes averaged thirty shillings per head; at present they do not exceed two pounds three shillings; an increase, considering the great improvements in production, quite inadequate to produce any injurious effects. Within the last ten years also many millions of taxes have been remitted, and yet it is notorious that the distress has rather increased; a proof which is surely decisive that taxation, taken in itself, is not the origin of the evil now complained of. With regard to the cultivation of inferior soils, it seems to be forgotten that within the last ten years arable land has been converted into pasture, and the comparative quantity of corn raised, contrasted with the labour employed in its production, has rather increased than otherwise. The improvements and the judicious employment of capital have tended to increase the yielding of the land, and if forty quarters of wheat exhibited a fair return of the annual labour of one man thirty years ago, it is probable that this return is now augmented to fifty-five quarters. There has thus been no operation in the cultivation of the land cal-

culated to increase the privations of the labourer; if profits have fallen, and if, consequently, the ability to prosecute industry successfully has diminished, it must be ascribed to other causes.

It seems a little singular that the remarks which appear from time to time respecting the cultivation of inferior soils, always presume, or at least give rise to the impression, that farmers in this country are progressively resorting to land diminishing in fertility. It is not considered that the period of unlimited monopoly, enjoyed by the agriculturers, has long passed, and that whenever corn rises above a certain rate abundant supplies are poured in from the continent; determining the price quite as much by the cost of production abroad as by that in Great Britain. Owing to this increase of competition throughout the world, it may be asserted as a general position, that less labour is now devoted to the production of corn than formerly. Dr. Chalmers, in his recent work on Political Economy, appears to have been so full of the hypothetical argument respecting food and population, that he has not looked around and attended to what is actually passing in the world. It is not only in England but in all other parts that the produce of the soil has been increased by diminished labour, in consequence of improvements in cultivation. In many parts the tenure on which land is held has been advantageously altered; improved implements of husbandry have been introduced; roads have been opened; and, in short, natural advantages,

which were neglected or crippled in their developement, have had free scope given to them to extend commerce. The result has been to reduce the price of corn in its real, as well as in its money price, throughout the world, and this probably will continue to operate for the next century.

Closely associated with the preceding error is another circumstance, which has given rise to much misunderstanding. It is generally supposed that the fund devoted to the support of industry is a fixed quantity, at all times stretched to its utmost capability to defray the wages of labour; but it will be seen from the preceding reasoning, that this fund rises or falls according to circumstances, and can be varied at pleasure, whenever there is extensive domestic consumption, and when manufacturers are disposed to avail themselves of the resources of credit. At the present time the annual production of the United Kingdom may be estimated at two hundred and twenty millions. According to the received notions on this subject, this is the whole of the production which the capital of the country is susceptible of bringing into existence. But so far is this from being the case, that if the manufacturers or master producers themselves were examined on the subject, they would unanimously declare that the production might be increased to three hundred millions, without any addition of substantive capital, but solely from their directing a greater degree of energy to business, and working their establishments to their extreme capabilities. It should be remem-

bered that capital is not only the mere accumulation of labour, but that the accumulations may be so rapid as to exhibit in many manufacturing districts almost an instantaneous creation of wealth. Were all the skill, energy, and knowledge, of the most approved systems of manufacturing industry possessed by numerous aspirants, who could procure credit, provided a suitable opportunity presented itself, put into requisition, the annual production of the United Kingdom, in the year 1834, might be extended to four hundred millions, without a single new discovery, but merely by stretching existing capabilities to their extreme point. Such extensive plans of business will probably not be realized, but the inherent difficulties are not attributable to any deficiency of capital, if by that term is meant the power to extend production.

With regard to the labourers themselves, many causes have undoubtedly conspired, within the last half century, to increase their privations, independently of the causes enumerated. Great fluctuations in wages are almost always injurious: when high, they give rise to idle and improvident habits, which are sure to entail pernicious consequences; when low, they necessarily cause temporary pauperism, which destroys independence of character, and retards the recovery of healthy commerce. Too many periods, distinguished for both these injurious operations, have been witnessed in this country, and they have materially added to other evils, sufficiently calamitous in themselves, which bear upon the great body of the people. It is probable, also, that the changes

in manufacturing industry have occasioned temporary injuries. The introduction of machines cannot fail, sooner or later, of being advantageous to the labourer, because they open new markets to national enterprise, which soon diffuses signal advantages. They extend, besides, consumption at home; there is the same revenue to expend, and the consumer giving a less sum for the article manufactured by the new machinery, has, of course, a larger sum to spend on other articles, which must, in some shape, give employment to the labouring population generally. But it may happen, when the machines are first resorted to, that they force the labourer to change his business; in this case, even presuming him trained to habits of application, he may suffer much from the circumstance of his having attained considerable proficiency in his superseded employment, while in the new one he must be content to receive the wages of a novice. This circumstance has pressed hardly on many of our operatives, and has caused great distress at times when remedies are difficult. But still, this is an evil which should be foreseen and provided for. It is common to the middle classes, for not only these individually may be superseded in their businesses, but whole classes may be permanently injured by political changes; they repine not, because they know well they cannot help themselves by any other means than by their own prudence and increased frugality. It is precisely by the same means that the labouring classes should repair corresponding injuries of a temporary nature, until what appears a concentrated

evil to them alone shall have diffused general benefit, and, at length, rolled back in an altered and fructifying form upon themselves.

We need not, therefore, attend to transient derangements which operate their own cure; leading principles are our object; and keeping these in view, we have arrived at an important stage in every inquiry, a clear ascertainment of the predominant cause of those evils which we seek to remedy. It is to the disproportion between the employers and the employed, that pauperism in the United Kingdom is attributable; and there cannot be difficulty in pronouncing, that it is to be corrected in one of two ways, or by the operation of these conjointly.

First, by teaching the labourers the same habit of restraint in marriage as is practised in the middle classes of society.

Secondly, by providing the means for the labourers to shape out work for themselves, without detriment to others; or to raise the meritorious amongst them to the state of master producers, so that they may be enabled to give employment to the entire number who are at present idle.

Section II.

Capacity for the Production of Wealth.

It is now necessary to shew, that if society were adjusted in the proportions explained, there could be no excess of commodities produced, and mankind

might proceed indefinitely adding to their wealth. Let us suppose at any given time there were a hundred manufacturers affording employment to a thousand workmen, and that these conjointly produced the chief articles agreeable and useful to man. Let us suppose further, that the actual number of the labouring classes was eleven hundred, one hundred being quite unemployed, and supported in idleness by the rest of the community. Now, if these hundred unemployed labourers were organized into the state of masters and workmen, the former, by means of immaterial capital, or, in other words, skill and intelligence, being able to create employment for the whole, it is obvious that there must be a clear additional gain to the community. This new class of producers interferes not with the rest of the community already established; if they work for themselves, or produce articles for their own immediate consumption, they deprive no persons whatsoever of their employment. If they produce new articles, unknown to the community before, they add to the general enjoyments; and in both cases they obviously augment the total sum of national wealth. But this is not the entire of the benefit. In their former state they were unproductive paupers, supported out of the labour of the industrious classes. When they are converted into productive labourers a double advantage therefore is derived. The community is relieved of an oppressive tax, and increased energy is given to the general industry of the country.

This growing state of general production could continue indefinitely under a wise organization of industry; and the more it was extended the greater would be the abundance of the necessaries, conveniences, and luxuries of life. All classes would find their condition improved. A tailor, in the habit of making ten coats a-day, would find his business increase ten per cent. by the conversion of paupers into profitable producers: he would thus have demands for eleven; and, in exchange for the eleven, he would obtain a greater quantity of other commodities. It is difficult to conceive how a permanent glut or excess of commodities could arise under this proper adjustment of industry. This opinion, indeed, in a general sense long entertained by commercial writers, is now satisfactorily refuted. It is well known that every man's object in exerting his productive powers must be either to consume the entire produce of his labour himself, or to exchange it, or portions of it, for such commodities as he wishes to obtain from others. So long, therefore, as all produce equally, there cannot be any excess in any one branch. If they produce unequally, those that produce the most will appear to have an excess of commodities; but this excess arises from the circumstance that others have been negligent, and have not produced their average quantity: let them do so, and the glut will disappear.

It has been judiciously remarked, that an excess can be cured quite as well by an increase as by a di-

minution of production. The increase is only in articles of a different kind. Let us imagine a clothier, for example, to embody the idea of persons engaged in manufacturing industry, and a farmer, of those engaged in agriculture, and say that these two seek to exchange their articles with each other: each, of course, is disposed to consume the fruits of the other's labour as largely as possible. And let us suppose, at any given time, that the clothier produces a great quantity of clothes, not more than the farmer can or wishes to consume, but more than he is able to pay for: in this case, what is the remedy, and how are matters to be adjusted? In place of diminishing the quantity of clothes, the adjustment can take place quite as well by increasing the quantity of the farmer's produce; by giving more or a better quality of corn, butchers' meat, fruits, or wine; so that, value for value, the products of the two classes will exactly correspond. There seems, therefore, no limits to the enjoyment of the conveniences and luxuries of life. Contrasted with the state of things five hundred years back, it is probable that the various articles administering to the gratification of man have augmented a hundred fold. There is no reason to doubt that the same augmentation may not continue for ages, and that an inhabitant of Great Britain five hundred years hence, may feel contempt when, in a meditative mood, surrounded by intellectual and refined luxuries, he pictures to his thoughts the scanty furniture of our houses, the paucity of our conveniences, and the frugal simplicity of our living.

There is, undoubtedly, a belief that theory on this subject is at variance with practice, owing to the actual existence of a glut of manufactured goods, which, according to mercantile tradition, has existed from time immemorial, and which is at present deemed quite irremediable. A little explanation will suffice to reconcile the apparent inconsistency, and to exhibit the causes from which gluts practically originate.

In the United Kingdom the excess of commodities annually produced, as compared with profitable demand, proceeds entirely from the redundancy of labourers, and the relative diminution of consumption, contrasted with the increasing population. If at any given time we suppose the various branches of the community adjusted to each other, and that there are no extraordinary changes taking place in the channels of commerce, it does not appear that there would be a disposition to produce any one commodity in excess. Every business would be regularly adjusted to the habitual demand. But if a number of labourers start up who are excrescent to the services required by the community, they must consume some portion of its products without giving an adequate equivalent. There must, therefore, be a derangement in the products of the community; and this derangement, altering the customary and wholesome relations between supply and demand, will end in some parties possessing a quantity of goods for which they are unable to procure an advantageous sale. When this once begins to operate it increases

in its effects with accelerated force. The first tendency of the glut causes further derangement in other branches, these again creating evils in their turn; at the same time that the primary operating cause itself is acting with undiminished intensity. It is, therefore, not surprising that our manufacturers daily encounter an increasing difficulty of sale in their commodities, which they are too prone to attribute to any cause but the right one, that of a large body of the poorer classes living unproductively upon the earnings of others.

There is another description of glut which may arise in some parts, and which proceeds from peculiar national habits. If in any nation the avidity for gain or for accumulating savings out of income, in a collective sense, greatly predominate over the desire of spending, the first manifestation of the effects will be a comparative excess of commodities. By degrees this excess of commodities will disappear, and the avidity for gain or savings will manifest itself in another form; that is, in the accumulation of money, either at home or in private or public investment abroad. Such was the case in Holland, in the last century, both with regard to the prior accumulation of merchandize and the subsequent abundance of money. There is, undoubtedly, a tendency in this state of things to correct itself, and in England the desire to consume, taken in a national or collective sense, is sufficiently strong to present little risk of accumulations proceeding so rapidly, as

from their own intrinsic operation to decrease the rate of profit. Each desire, that of saving or of spending, may vacillate beyond the fair equilibrium at times; but from the large power of national consumption, caused by the spending of public annuitants and others, the two, in the main, are nearly balanced.

Besides these two descriptions of glut, an excess of manufactured goods, or, in other words, an inequality in the distribution of the products of the world, proceeds at times from the capricious changes in the policy of governments. But this derangement is usually of a temporary nature, and by no means impugns the general principle. It is natural to assume that commercial knowledge, every where expanding, must sooner or later teach nations the most advantageous line of policy; and as all the advantages which each people respectively possess are elicited, commerce generally will extend. Even supposing a length of time to elapse before this auspicious state of things is realized, Great Britain need not suffer herself to be obstructed in her career of unlimited advancement by the ignorance or illiberality of foreigners. Possessed of colonies unbounded in extent, of unrivalled fertility, and presenting every advantage for commerce, she has within herself inexhaustible means for extending production, and augmenting the enjoyments of her people.

Section III.

Capacity for the increase of Population.

Having considered the question, in respect to the possibility of production extending to an injurious excess, we have now to view the converse of the proposition, and to consider the possibility of population outstripping production, or the means of subsistence. The great argument, in a hypothetical sense, relative to population, it is well known, rests upon the basis that mankind increase in a geometrical series of 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256; while the supply of food increases in the arithmetical series 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. It is assumed, for example, that when society is in a prosperous state, with an unlimited supply of food at its command, the population doubles itself in twenty-five years, quadruplicates itself in fifty years, and so on progressively. On the other hand, it is maintained that the land can only be taken into cultivation acre by acre, but can have no tendency to increase in a geometrical ratio; and, therefore, in its capabilities it must soon be left far in arrear. Thus if population be doubled, the population so doubled possesses the prolific capacity unimpaired, and has a tendency again to double itself; but doubled fertility has no such tendency to double itself—it cannot be a cause of quad-

rupled fertility; but the doubled population can, and has besides in itself an undiminished stimulus to become so. Supposing, therefore, the population of Great Britain at present to be 15,000,000, in twenty-five years it would be 30,000,000, in fifty years it would be 60,000,000, in seventy-five years it would be 120,000,000, and in a century it would be 240,000,000; while, according to the arithmetical increase in the supply of food, the means of subsistence would be only equal to the support of 60,000,000, leaving a population of 180,000,000 totally unprovided for.

Previous to examining the accuracy of this doctrine, two circumstances may be submitted. First, by assuming that twenty-five years is the period that society would double itself, under the most favourable circumstances, the generality of enquirers are apt to be impressed with the overwhelming operation of the population principle; and with this vivid feeling on the mind, they are pre-disposed to consider that nothing can keep pace with its irresistible march. But we shall endeavour to show that twenty-five years is too short a period to take for the doubling of the population, in case we consider the welfare of society unrestrained by any considerations relative to food. In the second place, by selecting England as the example, and confining our attention to her insulated situation, we are apt to form confined opinions in respect to the natural capabilities of the land to afford subsistence. If we take

eighty years to be the period of doubling, which probably ought to be the period selected, even were unlimited supplies of food at our disposal, and on the other hand consider that all the world is open to cultivation, it is obvious that many centuries must elapse before practically there can be any actual deficiency of sustenance; and this reflection, tending to abate the immediate alarm, allows us to view the subject with greater coolness.

It is admitted that this only postpones the evil, and by no means impugns the principle laid down by Mr. Malthus. The question then is, are we ever to arrive at that gloomy state of things, in which at last the geometrical series will have surpassed the arithmetical, and that we must virtually pronounce that population has an inherent tendency to increase faster than food?

In examining this question, it appears singular that the attention of most writers has been exclusively directed to the accuracy of the position respecting the geometrical increase of population, but never to the question whether or not labour, or, in other words, the raising of subsistence, cannot be augmented equally in a geometrical ratio. According to the first blush of the subject, every enquirer who contrasted the primitive state of man with his present condition would be disposed to pronounce that human labour was likely to excel every thing else in its capabilities of a high geometrical increase. There appear to be no bounds whatever to the advancement of science; and it seems a little singular

that Mr. Malthus, who has so eloquently adverted to the brilliant career of physical discovery, should not have reflected upon the possibility of making that discovery subservient to the purposes of man. According to every conclusion which can at present be formed, the powers of labour are unlimited. Let us trace for a moment the improvements with which, even now, in the infancy of knowledge, we are acquainted. We need not stop to notice the actual improvements which have been introduced in the cultivation of the soil. We know that by ordinary means —by the rotation of crops, artificial grasses, improved modes of ploughing, and the agricultural inventions which have distinguished the last generation, that the yielding of the land has been doubled and trebled. If we carry our views a step higher, and refer to the manner in which other arts may bear upon agriculture, we are forced to conclude that the capabilities of improvement expand in place of contract, and that the higher we go in our efforts the greater appear our resources. By the magical transformations of chemistry, saw-dust, it is stated, is susceptible of conversion into a substance bearing an analogy to bread, and, though less palatable than that manufactured from flour, yet no way disagreeable, and both wholesome and digestible as well as highly nutritive.* Dry bones also can be made a magazine of nutriment, capable of preservation for years, and ready to yield sustenance in the form best adapted to the support

* Herschel, Discourse on Natural Philosophy, p. 65. Phil. Trans. 1827, p. 381.

of life on the application of steam, which enters so largely into all modern processes.† Rags are capable of producing sugar, by the agency of one of the cheapest and most abundant acids;‡ and, in short, were analysis zealously directed to these subjects inexhaustible riches would be unfolded, were it deemed necessary to partake of them. Do these inventions place the progress of labour in the arithmetical or geometrical series? The Chemist is at direct variance with the Political Economist on this question, and which of them is the best judge? But, before we anticipate the answer, the entire case of the former should be fully stated. In the last example the weight of the sugar will be more than the weight of the rags: a portion of another element will be absorbed. This fact opens another world to us, and suggests striking reflections. Why should it be taken for granted, that the field for the operations of man is limited? The vast discoveries which chemistry and geology are displaying should rather induce us to conclude that there is not only no limit to the exertions of man, but that there is no limit to the materials on which his exertions are to work. All the elements in nature seem to be closely allied; the solid, the liquid, and aerial states of body are mere stages of gradual transitions from extremes, and glide into each other by insensible degrees. The

† Herschel, Discourse on Natural Philosophy, p. 65. Annales de l'Industrie. Fevrier, 1829.

‡ Ibid. p. 64. Annales de Chimie, vol. xii. p. 184.

changes which are constantly taking place in nature proceed merely from the decomposition of primary elements. It is by decomposition that renovation succeeds to decay, that barren rocks may be covered with fertile soil, the soil clothed with verdure, the plants converted into animals, and these again returned to their original state of decomposition, affording new materials for the repetition of the process, and thus exhibiting an interminable system of material organization complete within itself. If, therefore, we obey the directions of the analyst and refer to first principles, we are not justified in pronouncing that the materials for vegetable organization cannot keep pace with the materials of animal creation. By first principles must be meant a reference to the constituent elements of matter; in plants these are hydrogen, carbon, and oxygen, and by the most beautiful ordination of Providence the putrescence of animal substances gives a constant supply of these constituent elements, so that the renovation of the vegetable world is harmoniously adjusted to that of the animal. We know at present that the most sterile desert can be converted into a fertile region by the decomposition described; and in reality there seems no insuperable difficulty in creating aerial terraces, constantly resuscitated from the decomposition of animal matter below. It is well known to the geologist that fine vegetable particles are virtually created in platforms intervening between rocks, not by the change of earth or the mouldering of the rocks, but from the

air above. The carbonic acid, heavy as it is, finds its way through the most subtle atmosphere for this purpose, and conveys nourishment to the lichen even on the summit of the mountain. In this case, means and materials being unlimited, if the observations of the geologist be correct, it is difficult to assent to the hypothetical argument, or to consider how man should ever be destitute of food. If we take any given number of people, ten millions for example, and imagine them placed in a desert, indeed no matter where, the decomposition of matter should be equal to the supply of vegetable organization, and if the number be doubled, or increased to one hundred millions, the same increase will take place in the decomposed elements, giving a corresponding increase to the vegetable creation. On the same principle, the greater the number of animals which man may subvert, either for utility, for pleasure, or for food, the greater will be the quantity of vegetable nutrition elicited, and consequently still will the vegetable world keep pace with the encreasing demands of the animal race.

It does not, therefore, appear to be correct, to pronounce dogmatically that the earth has no tendency to double or quadruplicate its fertility, or that neither science nor mechanical invention can raise produce adequate to the increase of population. This great question is at once decided in the affirmative, if we can admit that the decay of the animal world affords nourishment to the plants, and that the operation of this harmonious action and reac-

tion is inexhaustible. Man undoubtedly has yet to learn much before he can aspire to control any of these processes: but he should never despair. In science we are as yet ignorant of nature's wonders: it is only within the last generation that our discoveries have been directed to the practical arts, and changes have already occurred in production, leaving the anticipation of sanguine projectors of the last age immeasurably in arrear. Ages of labour and research can never exhaust new combinations of the most simple materials, all of which are capable of being applied to useful purposes. Nature is a prodigious operator when properly propitiated, and the great discoveries of the present age are nothing more than making her labour as an obedient handmaid for human gratification. We know that by means of a little heat, judiciously applied, followed by sudden refrigeration, prodigious rocks can be cleft asunder, causing us to gaze with wonder at the execution of such gigantic operations by the simplest means. These present the germ merely of that science which man one day is destined to possess. The elixir vitæ is probably beyond our reach; but who would venture to pronounce that, throughout all time, crops of corn must continue to be annual. Means may hereafter be devised to procure twenty within a week, and political economists, in place of reasoning on the concentric grades of land, progressively diminishing in fertility, may behold new machines perpetually arising, placing the active capi-

talists at each stage in a superior situation by their gradual augmentation of profits.

If the reader drop in his thoughts the hypothetical argument, and consider the discoveries and resources we have endeavoured briefly to sketch, as likely to be applied to the actual affairs of life, he may be inclined to smile at the conceit; but if he consider them with reference merely to the solving of an abstract question, he will suspend his ridicule. It is quite as extravagant a thought to imagine all the earth fully tilled by ordinary means, and the people checked in their increase by the insufficiency of food, as it is to suppose the inventions we have described practically bearing upon the concerns of life. The real question is simply this: is there a possibility that labour, and the materials on which it has to work, can increase in a geometrical ratio? An answer in the affirmative is decisive: indeed, it may be assumed that hesitation or doubt on the subject is decisive, so prone is the mind to view the future condition of society according to the contracted scale by which it is accustomed to judge of the past and the future.

Let us dwell for a moment upon our past progress, and consider the vast time which must elapse before it is necessary to have recourse to any of the expedients which seem hypothetically to present in the distance such glowing treasures. In the first place, there is at least one thousand years before the present means of cultivating the land can be exhausted,

even supposing that population should continue to increase at a rapid rate. What a prodigious time is thus afforded for the discovery and developement of further knowledge, and for investigating and collating the principles of population.

In the second place, the circumstance of all the land being cultivated throughout the world, necessarily presumes that all countries are well governed, and therefore the general civilization, diffusion of knowledge, and high moral government, must present unbounded means for improvement, and, as a natural effect, the wisest laws will be enacted to elevate the human faculties.

In the third place, in this high state of good government, many more minds must be at work to enlarge the physical dominion of man. If a few millions were able to produce an Arkwright or a Watt, a hundred millions, it is to be presumed, would produce ten or twenty such gifted individuals, and this geometrical increase in the volume of mind, operating in every country throughout the globe, exhibits the prodigious power which would be brought to bear on every subject, producing ameliorating effects on the species which it requires a vivid imagination even to conceive. The sciences moreover are dependant upon each other—they yield reciprocal assistance—and discoveries made in one of them sometimes suggest entirely new views, and cause the subduction of natural obstacles, which otherwise might have been deemed impracticable.

From this outline the notion of an eventual superfecundity of population afflicting the world, cannot but appear puerile. For ages to come the question can be held under discussion, presenting a fair subject for the investigation of learned and philosophical societies, without any practical evils resulting. Even in what may be termed our probationary career, it does not appear that any injurious consequences would arise were population to continue rapidly increasing. In a former section it was stated, that for more than a century, in all probability, the actual food procured by the labour of man from the land will sustain no diminution. The introduction of the best implements of cultivation, and the most approved system of farming, into countries possessing the greatest natural fertility, will keep up a larger supply of food, by the same intensity of labour, than will be required for the increase of population. We have a fair right to assume that commercial knowledge will extend, and that nations will at length learn their true interest, and permit a beneficial interchange of commodities. In this case, all the improvements and advantages appertaining to agriculture at present existing in Great Britain, will be copied into other countries, and at the termination of the time stated, the price of food, or, in other words, the quantity of labour required to produce it, may be just the same as at present. But, in the mean time, do the advanced countries remain stationary? Has agriculture, even if regarded in its ordinary operations, no further capabilities of improvement? For time out of mind

writers on this subject have indulged in gloomy predictions; and yet when events have actually arrived, they exhibit society under an aspect quite different from that expected; completely falsifying many of those opinions which in their day were considered sound and plausible. Whether the question is viewed hypothetically or practically, it is important to attend to past experience in respect to the futility of these predictions, where the data are necessarily imperfect. It will take two centuries at the very least before there will be any real difficulty in procuring subsistence—that is, before such land will be resorted to in the agriculture of the world, that one acre will be positively unable to yield thirty bushels of wheat annually. If we take the statements of the farmers themselves relative to improvements known to be practicable, it is probable that two centuries more would elapse before this annual quantity would be reduced to twenty bushels, supposing universal peace and freedom of commerce. Even if changes should take place in the quantity of outlay required for cultivation, it would make little difficulty to society in the aggregate. There may be a change in the value of one commodity to another; but so long as there is abundance for all, which is the basis of our argument, there can be no difference to the community taken collectively. Advantages evidently ensue from the extension of science and capital to agriculture. It is unnecessary to enter into details respecting the regulation of prices; but it may be worthy of remark that, if at the lapse of a very long

period the land diminished in its bounteousness, and that, consequently, there was much labour and difficulty in procuring subsistence, the labourers would not be reduced to want, provided there was throughout society a proper proportion between the employers and the employed. The baneful effects of increasing sterility would diffuse itself equally over the entire community. The first effects would be to diminish the enjoyment of luxuries. At present, from the fertility of the earth, there is a large surplus over and above the subsistence of the labourers who are actually engaged in agriculture; and it is precisely out of this surplus that all the expenses of art and civilization, and all the higher comforts and elegancies of life are defrayed. Suppose, therefore, that there is increased sterility in the land, from the approach of society to the extreme limits of cultivation; the surplus will be less, and the means for the enjoyment of these elegancies and luxuries will evidently be diminished. That the better classes must surrender their enjoyments, while, on the other hand, the labourers neither starve nor suffer serious privation, is evident from the fact that the labourers are not in excess to the actual work required of them; their services, therefore, are quite as necessary to their employers as these classes are to them, and, consequently, being able to control their wages, they may slightly participate in, but they cannot solely sustain, the distress. Timely warning is thus given to the community in the aggregate of the approaching barrenness; and an increase of popula-

tion need never to be feared, if there be a proper proportion between the active capitalists and the labouring classes. Both these hold their destinies in their own hands, and it is in their power to make the grandees, or the unproductive consumers, in every country feel the first approach of misfortune, caused by the diminution of the surplus, out of which all luxuries must eventually be liquidated.

If this reasoning be sound, it fills the mind with the most exhilarating and joyful anticipations. The great question of ulterior prosperity resolves itself into an adjustment between population and labour. No matter what ratio of increase we give to each of these respectively, it would seem that by either judicious expansion or contraction they may harmonise with each other, preserving the bulk of the people from distress. If the reader be filled with the notion of the irresistible power of the human race rapidly to increase its numbers, he may be reminded of the actual augmentation of labour in its various forms, which has been witnessed in this country within the last generation, and also of the opinions of the most distinguished living authorities, that the resources of physical discovery are unlimited. On the other hand, if he be sceptical in respect to the geometrical ratio, when applied to human sustenance, and considers that our brilliant visions of the ultimate achievements of science belong more to romance than to philosophical discussion, he may be reminded of the slow increase of professional persons and others in the middle sphere of life; proving the

efficacy of knowledge, forethought, and moral restraint. It never was designed by Providence, that the ultimate capabilities of satisfying the wants of man should take place without intellectual exertion, or that, in any period of his career, he might sluggishly trust to nature, and permit his faculties to slumber. Were a profusion of food to arise spontaneously, like ripe fruit in the Garden of Eden, he would, so far as is known of his present constitution, become inert, and oppressed with a mental stupor. The difficulties to be encountered stimulate all branches of his endowments—every diversity of pursuit. They incite the physical, the intellectual, and the moral faculties to combine against the formidable obstacles which nature occasionally presents, as if out of love to her most favoured offspring, to quicken his strength; they impel the cultivator, the philosopher, and the legislator, to labour harmoniously in a common cause to accelerate the general advancement. It would be unwise if all were unfolded at once, or if posterity were forestalled of their labours; it is enough to shew that there is no uncontrollable law to check boundless amelioration, and it is not improbable that the future philosopher may regard our apprehensions, respecting the ulterior difficulty of procuring subsistence, much in the same manner as inquirers of the present day look back upon the prognostications of the dark ages, relative to the destruction of the world by an earthquake or a comet.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION.

THE checks to population are generally divided into the positive and the preventive. The positive include every cause which tends to cut off mankind in a violent manner, or which in any degree contributes to shorten the natural duration of human life. The preventive checks are those which operate before hand, or which obstruct or retard marriages, and thus prevent an offspring from being brought into the world, which the parents are unable to support. Under both of those heads there are some observations to offer.

SECTION I.

Positive Checks.

WHEN we survey the revolutions of empires and the existing state of the population in almost all the countries of the world, we are forced to admit that the scanty numbers of people, compared to the extent

of fertile territory, together with the depopulation of many regions once flourishing, have been attributable almost solely to the positive checks. These are war, epidemics, pestilence, famine, and general vice, which sweeps off in loathsome disease whole communities; and which, affecting the future as well as the present, renders replenishment more difficult.

It is no doubt melancholy to reflect upon these dreadful calamities, which almost all countries have been fated to endure, and which have sometimes swept away nearly one-third of the entire population. But, though such has been the history of the past, still the primary principles which regulate prosperity or adversity appear to prevail. Just in proportion as government has improved and civilization advanced have the evils diminished. The famines and plagues which in former ages were frequent, and sometimes depopulated entire districts, have almost disappeared from civilized Europe; and at the present moment in Asia and the Eastern world generally, the severity of these scourges seems proportioned to the deserts, moral and political, of the different nations. Russian Tartary and British India appear to escape, while in other parts, where the governments are despotic, and where there is little inducement for man to put forth his energies, perhaps hardly a year passes over without extreme privations, and sometimes from the operation of one or other of these checks whole districts will be left utterly destitute of inhabitants. The greater the altitude of civilization the less is the liability to

violence of any kind. Amongst commercial states a severe scarcity, still less a famine, rarely prevails, and little injury would be inflicted if the government were provident, and if charity were widely manifested. Epidemics also, though they constitute a source of alarm, and fill men's minds with the idea of precarious mortality, hardly take off a number sufficient to produce a sensible effect upon the aggregate population. War, too, in the present day loses part of its former devastating character, and it appeared in the cases of France and England that at the termination of the most sanguinary conflict those rival nations ever were engaged in, their population had increased in a high ratio, unparalleled in their histories. It is evident, therefore, that as the amelioration of society advances, redeeming lenitives begin to operate, and there is a progressive diminution of violent evils.

It is important, perhaps, to consider, that the operation of violent checks fails in ultimately correcting the evils attendant upon a redundant population. If famine or any positive check take place in a country in which there was great poverty resulting from redundancy, so that a large number of the people were destroyed, it does not necessarily follow that there would be any diminution of the poverty or of the relative distress. It depends upon the condition of life and character of the people cut off whether or not those who remain find themselves in better circumstances. If the mortality be amongst the labour-

ing class only, the evils will be diminished, and the redundant population will be removed. If the mortality be amongst the better classes, or rather those who give the play to industry, and with whom it originates, the evils will be augmented, and the redundant population will be increased. If the mortality be in equal proportion amongst the better classes and the poor, the comparative extent of the distress, and the redundant population, will remain unchanged. Were the cholera, for example, to be strictly indiscriminate in its solemn visitings, and to attack both rich and poor alike, carrying off large numbers, we should still find, when it had passed away, and commerce recovered from the temporary stagnation, that there was poverty in the streets, and the same relative number of persons abjectly offering their services, but unable to procure employment. And it is probable, contrary to the prevailing opinion, that in the census for the succeeding ten years, notwithstanding the diminution of people, and the consequent excess of food, compared to the habitual supply, the ratio of increase would not be greater than in the preceding decennial return. It is, indeed, a great mistake to imagine that after famine or pestilence society increases in an accelerated ratio. That result depends upon other causes; upon the habits of the people; the description and rank in life of those cut off; the nature of the government; and its capabilities to prevent a recurrence of the evils. In Spain or in Turkey the population in more prosperous times may have been twenty millions respectively. Disease,

war, and famine, may destroy four millions; but the remaining sixteen millions will not elevate the ratio of their increase, because they have a wider space or a larger division of land to each individual to raise subsistence. Subsequent calamities may further reduce the population to twelve millions, or even lower, and yet still there will be no vast strides made to repair the injury, and the extremes of poverty and want may be witnessed amongst the reduced population of twelve as well as among the twenty million.

From these considerations it would appear that some prevalent notions respecting population are erroneous. The violent attacks on Mr. Pitt for establishing his tax on bachelors might have been spared; not that this tax is the wisest possible, but because assuredly it did not produce the evils generally depicted. If the tax were paid by the better classes of society, it added, or rather it was calculated by its operation to add, to the number of that class with whom industry originates, and whose wealth would admit of subdivision. It would, therefore, stimulate invention, and the further acquisition of both material and immaterial capital. Instances could be described of two individuals possessing the same means of giving employment to labourers in productive industry; the one has remained single, and has employed during his lifetime, say, ten men; the other has married, and employing ten men himself, has given an education to his children sufficient to enable them to avail themselves of the resources of credit, and to strike out paths for themselves in active

commerce: the consequence has been to give in all branches of his family employment to a hundred men. Has the married man or the bachelor most contributed to repress redundancy?

Section II.

Preventive Checks.

The preventive checks to increase of numbers, as Mr. Malthus observes, are peculiar to man, and arise from that exertion of his reasoning faculties which enables him to calculate distant consequences. In civilized communities every man must be aware of the necessity of possessing something to offer for his food; he must reflect, also, whether or not the quantity and quality of such subsistence as he is enabled to compass will continue unchanged, or his personal gratifications be in any degree diminished, in case he marry, and be obliged to divide his wages or allowances amongst a rising family. To strengthen this habit of reflection is the object of enlightened legislation: it already exists efficaciously amongst the middle classes of society, and could it be extended to the labourers, there would be little fear of poverty appearing amongst them. But the experience of mankind must evince that it is not possible for

didactic admonitions, respecting the postponement of marriage, to operate upon the minds of the lower classes with any salutary effect. In whatever way statesmen may speculate, and with whatever zeal they may enact their laws, the mass of mankind will always consider that, so far as moral obligation is involved, to marry early is a virtuous, not a vicious act. The feelings, or, if the term be more appropriate, the deeply rooted prejudices, of almost all classes lead them to believe that a man who is instrumental in producing an increase of citizens is a benefactor to the state. It is erroneous, therefore, to expect that the consequences of imprudent marriage will be looked upon by the parties themselves in the same light as they contemplate disease, opprobium, and misery, the attendants upon drunkenness and similar vices. The preventive checks can only be introduced amongst the labourers by inducing them to imitate the habits and manners of the middle orders, with whom the restraints to marriage proceed as much from selfish as from moral considerations. A strong propensity and governing motive of conduct can only be controlled by opposing to it another still stronger. Man has his eye constantly on his fellow, and dreads contempt as an evil, if long-suffering and degradation have not benumbed his faculties. His self-gratification works in many directions; and it may lead to forethought in regard to marriage, quite independently of the commendation or the censures of the moralist. In reality, considerations concerning

subsistence do not regulate the extent of numbers in the upper classes of society. There are restraints not associated with the word moral, which act with powerful efficacy. These may be divided into two classes; the one relates to the desire of immediate pleasure or gratification; the other to the fear of future pain, or the loss of personal comforts. In the first, there are all the intellectual resources which education presents, together with the many amusements in which a single man can participate—the theatre, the club, the evening party, and numberless such attractive places for spending the time agreeably; these, taken in conjunction, greatly strengthen the disposition of men not possessed of affluence to abstain from marriage, or at least to postpone it. The restraints belonging to the second class are referable to those habits of society, such as a display in dress or external appointments, which, always existing in a highly civilized state, it becomes discreditable to leave ungratified. In a virtuous and enlightened community these operate with extraordinary force; and they certainly are of a more amiable nature than the other class, which spring from selfishness. But with regard to the labouring orders neither of these restraints operate. A single man especially, if he reside in the most advanced agricultural districts, enjoys no pleasures of any kind: his life is irksome, cheerless, and solitary; his self-respect too, it is to be feared, is utterly gone; and so far from having any reason to be surprised at the melancholy results which are presented to us, we

should rather think it strange if the redundancy, dissatisfaction, and misery, amongst the agricultural labourers were less, considering their habits, manners, and resources. But in examining into the principles which regulate the operation of the preventive check there is no reason to despond. It is something to find out the object desired; and the ultimate attainment of that object does not appear to be utterly insuperable.

It may assist us to trace the habits of the highest description of persons receiving wages, and then those of the lowest class of daily labourers; an insight into these particulars will complete this part of the subject, and clear up any doubts that may arise relative to the assumed superiority of increase of the working orders.

Bankers and Merchants' clerks may be placed at the head of the list. Other persons of superior rank may certainly be considered as living by wages; but they are of a different description, and they may be supposed to enjoy an opportunity to vary their earnings, either by superior talents, or by industry. On the other hand, clerks, generally speaking, are confined to a stated service, and the rate of salary is adjusted to a corresponding uniformity. Now the object is to enquire, what are the habits of those persons, and at what age do they marry. It is notorious that the majority of them postpone it to a very late period of life, and that very many never marry at all. The next enquiry naturally is, what is the cause of this? The common answer

that they cannot afford it is very imperfect and unsatisfactory. Other persons, with a much smaller income, afford it, and manage to rear a family. The true reason is, that mere subsistence absorbs but a minor portion of the income of these clerks, but custom has imperatively required of them to preserve a respectable appearance. A large expense is entailed upon them in the article of dress; they have little as it were to come and go upon in what appertains to food merely; and any increased expense on this head would so trench on what they deem indispensable to their own personal appearance, that marriage is regarded by them with the utmost apprehension. With this class, therefore, it may fairly be said that restraints arising out of these habits of society operate so strongly as not only to keep population within due limits, but effectually to check it; and that if other classes were similarly influenced, the speedy depopulation of the country would be the chief dread.

If we take an inferior class of people, warehousemen and persons employed in printing offices for instance, we shall find the existence of a feeling similar to that we have just described, though in diminished proportion. Their work may be taken to be half corporeal and half mental: so great an outlay is not required in their clothing as in that of the former class, and they have therefore greater latitude in what relates to food; they consequently do not view the cares of married life with so much caution. Still

there is hesitation and delay, and it must be admitted that such restraint operates to keep down population.

In a still lower order of society, that of mechanics and working tradesmen, we observe a further diminution in certain branches of their expenditure. The single men have a considerable latitude to accumulate in what relates to food, compared to those who are married, and the state is consequently entered into freely. Even here, however, some restraint exists. It is well known, from statistical tables which have been published, that journeymen, in many trades, are accustomed to spend a good deal apart from food; and thus, at least, to delay marrying longer than is absolutely necessary for them to have saved the means. This is all that is sought to be established; for population is undeniably checked by such delays.

We have now come down to the common day labourers, and they are beyond comparison the most important in the inquiry. With these the supply of food alone is considered, and it is known that no restraint whatever, in respect to consequences, has hitherto operated. It thus appears that, step by step, prudential considerations of reviewing all the consequences attendant on marriage prevail, more or less, according to the gradations of expense which habit has imposed upon the various classes receiving wages. Were the same considerations to influence common labourers, and were custom to impose upon them the necessity of making a certain display in their persons

and in their houses, they would hesitate before they made the sacrifice of personal comforts, which they must see were indispensably necessary in order to provide for the expenses of a wife and family. The advantageous results that would ensue to the community from this change would be quite as great as those accruing to the labourers themselves. In case a temporary stagnation of commerce took place there would be no extreme privations, no pauperism. Suppose the scale of living of the superior class of persons receiving wages to be at any given period equitably adjusted, and suppose from stagnation of trade or any other cause that salaries were reduced. In these classes a reduction in that branch of expenditure which could best be dispensed with, clothing and lodging, would then take place; let the evil continue and encroachment must be made on many other articles; a stage yet further, and many real necessaries must be relinquished. During this progression there is not actual misery; there is merely comparative privation of former comforts amongst the married people who have families; but in the mean time how are the unmarried and those coming to maturity affected. Men already burthened with families have no alternative. With the hardness of the times they must of necessity reduce their scale of living, even in what relates to the indispensable articles of life. Not so the single man. If custom has established a standard of artificial wants which it would be discreditable not to satisfy, and the neglect of which would expose

him perhaps to the derision of those just one step above him in society, then would his mind admit of a strongly increased bias against incurring the charge of a family. He would remain single, and ere a generation elapsed the number of competitors would be diminished, and ultimately adjusted to the demand for their services. The whole of this reasoning will receive considerable corroboration on referring to the difference of customs which prevails in many parts of the United Kingdom. Precisely in proportion to the operation of the species of pride adverted to does the preventive check to population appear conspicuous. In endeavouring to extend this feeling the labourers themselves must be willing coadjutors. There is no desire to exclude them from the pale of the social system, or to establish habits of restraint with them different from the rest of the community; the object is to exalt not to degrade, and enlightened benevolence moves hand in hand with expediency in the means taken to accomplish the change. Through the progress of civilization the better classes of society are enabled to compass more enjoyments; it is illiberal, therefore, to confine the lower classes to an undeviating standard. Artificial wants are relative, and while all classes acquire fresh means of gratification, so should each humble individual equally rise in the social scale. By this means the evils of extreme luxury on the one hand and deplorable poverty on the other, which are generally associated in the thoughts, as attendant on high civilization, would be

averted. By introducing elevated habits there may be a salutary increase of population, but it will still correspond with the demand for labour and not outrun it. In periods of temporary prosperity, for example, a labourer may receive high wages; but if his thoughts, as in many parts, only extend to the enjoyment of animal wants, he will early take a wife, and we shall behold his cottage crowded with a family, careless in their habits, negligent of their persons, and reckless of the future; but were the same labourer in the receipt of equal wages to feel uneasy at the thought of disreputable clothing, or the possibility of having a wife and children destitute of decent comfort, he would calculate with caution the expenses of a family, and there would be little fear of his contributing to over-people the world.

From these principles, respecting the operation of the preventive checks, a few reflections present themselves. In the first place population does not actually increase in strict conformity with the received opinions upon that subject. It is quite possible for the ratio of increase to be small in countries possessing a lavish abundance of food. The labouring population may be in an elevated position, so that strong feelings of self-respect may be established which assimilate them in their habits to the better classes of society, and which render the operation of prudential restraint eminently efficacious. There has certainly been a deterioration in the condition of the English labourers; there is great existing distress; and yet

according to every authentic information the rate of increase is greater now than formerly, so complete has been the destruction of the feeling of self-respect. Amongst the great body of the people at the present moment, sexual intercourse is the only gratification; and thus, by a most unfortunate concurrence of adverse circumstances, population goes on augmenting at a period when it ought to be restrained. To better the condition of the labouring classes, that is, to place more food and comforts before them, however paradoxical it may appear, is the wisest mode to check redundancy. On this principle many singular anomalies in Ireland can be explained. The increase of poverty in that country, which has certainly taken place within the last generation, has increased the number of births, and probably also the adult population. Were that country to emerge from her present condition, and were the object to restrain a further supply of labourers, the wisest course would be to give the people a greater command over the necessaries of life. When they are better fed they will have other enjoyments at command than sexual intercourse, and their numbers, therefore, will not increase in the same proportion as at present.

In the second place, from the foregoing principles the different rates of increase amongst town and agricultural labourers, and also amongst different districts of the same nation, can be explained. It is not solely owing to the sickliness of towns that population there is slow of increase: in some respects the

town population enjoys peculiar advantages; the medical attendance is better, and there are more comforts and foreign commodities, considered now as necessaries rather than as luxuries, procured with facility. In the present state of England there is not much difference in the bills of mortality, between the towns and country, and the smaller increase in town population proceeds from the greater efficacy of the preventive check. According to the progress of civilization, the rate of increase of every people undergoes considerable variation. Sometimes it increases, sometimes diminishes. It is quite possible for privations to diminish, while the people augment their numbers more slowly; and this does not proceed from any alteration in human fecundity as population becomes more dense and civilization progresses: it is owing to the increased efficacy of prudential restraint. In place of there being any tendency in population to diminish in proportion to the density of their numbers, it would appear that the exact contrary is the case. In St. Giles's, Shoreditch, the most crowded parts of the Borough, indeed in all the most populous parts of large towns, a greater number of persons are born than in other parts less densely inhabited. Where the people enjoy greater room in their dwellings observation is more sedulously fixed upon their actions, and, attending more to the comforts and decencies of life, they postpone marriage.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE PERIOD OF MARRIAGE MOST BENEFICIAL TO SOCIETY.

When we hear of a population doubling itself in twenty-five years, as the rate at which mankind increases under the most favourable circumstances, we are not to assume that this exhibits the most desirable state of society. It is quite possible for a people to put forth a far inferior procreative power, and yet in every respect to display a superior state of social organization, and one better adapted to the legislator to select as his model in framing his laws for domestic government. It is the longevity and the large number of persons that arrive at a marrying age, which forms the correct criterion in judging of the prosperity and general happiness of a people. If in America the mean expectation of life is only twenty-eight years, and if forty-four children out of one hundred die before they attain the age of ten years, while in England the expectation of life is fifty-four years, and out of one hundred only thirty-five die before the age of ten, we are justified in pronouncing that the state of society in England is preferable to that of America, notwithstanding that

the population of the latter country doubles itself in twenty-five, and that of the former in fifty-two years.

Neither are we to take it for granted, that a large number of births to each marriage necessarily proves that the ratio of increase of population is considerable; it is quite possible for so many as five births to take place to every marriage, and yet the population remain stationary or be even declining. This is easily accounted for by reflecting that for a population to increase people must not only be born, but they must live and come to maturity. There are parishes in some of the most crowded districts in large towns in which the births more than average five to each marriage, and yet such is the mortality amongst the children, caused by neglect, filth, and want of proper sustenance, that a constant supply of fresh settlers from other parts is required to recruit the population or to prevent it from lessening its numbers. These considerations should remove the erroneous opinions too frequently formed in respect to the comparative prosperity of different nations, when the power of procreation is alone attended to. For a considerable period, according to the decennial returns, there has been an increase in the duration of life in England. From 1700 to 1780 it has varied from one death in thirty-one to one death in forty-two. In 1790 it was one in forty-five, and according to the statement prefixed by Mr. Rickman to the last population returns, the average of 1796 to 1800 was forty-eight; 1806 to 1810, fifty-one; 1816 to 1820 fifty-seven; 1826 to 1830

it had declined to fifty-four. This exhibits, upon the whole, a material improvement in the general condition of the people, caused by superior medical treatment and greater cleanliness. The improvement in the manufacturing towns is the most conspicuous and surprising. In the interval between 1770 and 1780 the mortality in Manchester was one in twenty-four; in Liverpool one in twenty-seven and a half; the average throughout the manufacturing districts of the North was one in twenty-eight: and, according to the recent returns, the mortality for all Lancashire and the West Riding of York, at the last census, was fifty-seven. This certainly evinces an extraordinary change, and, notwithstanding the acknowledged distress, probably there is no people in the world exhibiting more healthy and desirable proportions, in respect to ages and general longevity, than the majority of the inhabitants of Great Britain. There is no doubt capability for much further improvement, and supposing that the question of food did not cramp the views of the legislator, or in other words, that he was not restrained in his plans of future amelioration by considerations respecting the ulterior difficulty of procuring sustenance, there are three circumstances which would guide him in his designs. First, he would endeavour to establish a society in which there should be the largest longevity possible: there should be, for example, the fewest deaths in infancy; a large proportion of the population should arrive at a marrying age; and after this period was past a rea-

sonable hope should present itself for the attainment of good old age. Secondly, he would endeavour to establish a state of society in which the physical developement of the human frame would display itself in a state of high power, energy, and general excellence. To have a strong, healthy and active race of men must be an object of primary importance to every nation; and there seems no reason why these great ends should not be kept in view in respect to the human race as well as the lower animals. Thirdly, he would endeavour to stretch to the utmost limits every amelioration connected with that higher part of man, his moral government. There can be no doubt that this important consideration can be much influenced by the notions of marriage which are generally prevalent in the community.

In all these prominent objects it would seem that nature works harmoniously, and what tends to establish one end equally acts to accomplish the others. To place some restraint upon the first impulse of the passions, and consequently to postpone marriage, not by any means to a late period, but to a time when the natural powers are fully developed, will eventually be found to confer the greatest advantages upon society. Under the first head, of longevity, it is well known that there is a relation between the period at which people in different nations arrive at maturity, and the period of their natural demise. It is with plants as with animals; quick vegetation and early ripening are always followed by premature

decay. Nations in which the average marrying age is eighteen to twenty will assuredly exhibit a population shorter lived than in those where the marrying age is twenty-five to twenty-seven. Indeed, the latter state of things presents so many advantages that few legislators would hesitate which to select had they unlimited choice, or were they solely desirous of producing a society in its most favourable condition, unconnected with any consideration respecting food. Life is sweet, and the moment a being is brought into the world reason combines with feeling in our fondly hoping that it may not be removed from the scene of its affections until a late period, when it has fairly run its course, and when the passions fall in with the physical frame in a natural decay.

In regard to the second point, it is known that the offspring of young parents is generally puny, and deficient in muscular fibre. This subject was noticed so far back as the time of Aristotle, who has expressed himself as follows: "Premature conjunc-" tions produce imperfect offspring; females rather " than males, and those feeble in make and short in " stature; that this happens in the human race as " well as in other animals is visible in the puny in-" habitants of countries where early marriages pre-" vail."* In another part he further observes: "to " the female sex premature wedlock is peculiarly " dangerous, since, in consequence of anticipating

* Aristotle-De Repub. B. iv. p. 246.

" the demands of nature, many of them suffer greatly " in child-birth, and many of them die." The opinions of modern writers on this subject have not varied, and it appears that, throughout the various charitable institutions in this country, those persons born of parents in the prime of life possess the physical endowments of their species in the greatest perfection.

In regard to the third point, it seems obvious that as marriage is delayed for a little while, and not formed on the first excitement, more discrimination will be displayed, and reason will exert her sway advantageously to suit the parties to each other. On the part of the rising offspring the beneficial results are manifold and striking. That species of education in infancy, derived from maternal care, is ever the most valuable; and it will be much better accomplished when the first joys of youth on the part of the mother are soothed down to contemplative womanhood. The zest for pleasure is abated, and her thoughts centre in the welfare and happiness of her offspring. How many are the cases where guilt itself is checked in its career by the force of affectionate reminiscences, arising in the bosom of a youth when far distant from his home, and removed from friendly counsel; the image of his mother floats before him; the vicious passion is repelled; and the waverer may for ever be fixed in a life of virtue from this first triumph of maternal precepts.

The salutary effects which would result to society in case the institutions of social life were established in accordance with these views, must be easily ap-

preciated. What the exact age most eligible for marriage should be must naturally depend upon climate and physical circumstances. In temperate regions, and in Europe in general, if twenty-five years were selected as the period, and if the marriage state were then freely entered into, it is probable that all the advantages just depicted would be obtained, and the period of doubling, making allowance for occasional emigrations in mercantile pursuits, would not be quicker than eighty to ninety years.

There must always be some preventive check in operation; and it would undoubtedly be desirable to have this check so adjusted that it would rise or fall according to the varying intensity of commercial changes or vicissitudes from which no country, however well governed, can escape. It would be instructive to ascertain the real operation of this check throughout the different nations of Europe; but the subject is complicated and difficult. The proportions of yearly marriages to the whole population is the most common criterion to select in order to determine the extent of its operation; but this mode is liable to some objections. If the people be increasing in their numbers rapidly, as in America, the proportion of yearly marriages to the entire population, would exhibit results entirely different from those appearing in a country where the population was nearly stationary. On the same principle also the degree of longevity is an important consideration in the question, and amongst healthy countries the customary mode of calculating the preventive

checks will give results rather below than above the real efficacy of its operation. It seems expedient, therefore, to investigate the ages of the population in each country at a given period; and by this means, on ascertaining the number of people within the marrying ages, and comparing them with the total number of marriages, we can discover pretty nearly the average periods of marrying, and consequently the operation of the preventive check. When the tables now in progress by Mr. Rickman are finished, the data will be complete for determining this point. In the mean time the following table, founded upon the population returns of 1821, will enable us to form a loose and general idea of its operation in England, and of the degree of its exertion required to adjust the future population to the prospects of the country.

ENGLAND.—POPULATION IN 1821.

Ages.	Total.	Proportion in 10,000.
Under 5	1,464,964	1491
5 to 10	1,282,339	1304
10 to 15	1,092,435	1112
15 to 20	974,690	992
20 to 30	1,552,226	1579
30 to 40	1,163,580	1183
40 to 50	920,850	937
50 to 60	648,169	658
60 to 70	445,272	453
70 to 80	221,269	225
80 to 90	59,616	61
90 to 100	5,051	5
Total ages returned..	9,830,461	10,000

Out of a population of ten thousand it thus appears that between the ages of twenty and thirty there are one thousand five hundred and seventy-nine males and females; and between the ages of thirty and forty, one thousand one hundred and eighty-three.

According to the usual mode of calculation these would be appropriated to each year as follows:

Age.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Age.	Males.	Females.	Total.
20	92	92	184	30	66	67	133
21	89	89	178	31	64	65	129
22	85	86	171	32	63	63	126
23	82	83	165	33	61	62	123
24	79	80	159	34	59	60	119
25	76	77	153	35	58	58	116
26	74	75	149	36	56	57	113
27	72	72	144	37	55	55	110
28	70	70	140	38	54	54	108
29	68	68	136	39	53	53	106
		Total....	1579			Total....	1183

In the last population returns it is stated, that the marriages are to the population as one to one hundred and twenty-nine. Out of a population of ten thousand, this would give seventy-seven marriages: now, on referring to the above table, it appears that there are seventy-six individuals who annually arrive at twenty-five years of age; it therefore follows that this is about the mean age of marriage; and since it is notorious that from accidents, emigration, or abstinence, many never marry at all, a large majority would appear to marry before twenty-five years of

age; a proof that, however the preventive check may operate amongst the middle classes of society, it acts with little efficacy amongst the bulk of the people.

If we suppose on an average four births to each marriage, there will be three hundred and eight births out of a population of ten thousand: taking the mortality at fifty-four years, there will be one hundred and eighty-five deaths: there will then be an annual excess of a hundred and twenty-three births out of a population of ten thousand, exhibiting an excess of births above the deaths to the whole of the living, in the proportion of one to eighty-one, which, according to the table given in Mr. Malthus's work, exhibits a decennial increase of about thirteen per cent., or a period of doubling in fifty-six years. This very nearly corresponds with the proportions now existing in this country; and it corroborates in some degree the previous calculation that twenty-five years is the mean age of marriage.

If we suppose the period of marriage postponed to twenty-eight years, the number of annual marriages will then be seventy, the births two hundred and eighty, giving an annual increase of ninety-five persons out of ten thousand: this exhibits an excess of births above the deaths to the whole of the living in the proportion of one to one hundred and five: and, according to the tables of Mr. Malthus, the decennial increase would be about ten per cent.; and the period of doubling about seventy-two years and a half.

This calculation, however, presumes that the postponement of marriage does not tend to diminish the prolificness of the women.

If we suppose, from the postponement of marriage, that the number of births is reduced to 3.5, the annual excess of births will then be sixty in ten thousand, or in the proportion of one to a hundred and sixty-six. This would exhibit a decennial increase of a little above six per cent., or a period of doubling in one hundred and fourteen years.

It is probable that the diminished fruitfulness of marriages, consequent upon the postponement assumed, would not be greater than what is stated. It has long been observed, that when women marry late in life, the postponement of the generative energies carries the prolificness beyond the average period.

Let us now examine what the effects would be upon the entire population, if the same abstinence were displayed amongst the lower as amongst the middle classes. From emigration to the various colonies, as well as from abstinence, it may be presumed, according to common observation in society, that one-fifth of the better classes in society remain single. Assuming the average period of marriage to be twenty-five, this would give sixty-two marriages annually and two hundred and forty-eight births, or an excess over the deaths of sixty-three. The decennial increase would then be six and a half per cent., the period of doubling would be a hundred and eleven years.

If one-sixth remain single, the decennial increase would be a little more than seven and a half per cent., the period of doubling ninety-seven years.

It appears, therefore, from these calculations, that were the same habits to prevail amongst the lower as amongst the middle classes of society, the increase of population in this country would virtually proceed at a very slow rate. Indeed, at the present time, we are disposed to exaggerate it, from merely looking at the actual increase of population, without investigating the causes to which it is properly ascribable. It does not appear that there is any very great increase in the procreative power for the last generation, notwithstanding the high ratios of increase which are decennially exhibited. It is the increase in longevity, proceeding from the diminished mortality amongst the children, which has occasioned the change. The same cause is operating throughout Europe; and some recent writers in France have stated that, notwithstanding the great increase of population in that country, the births are not more numerous now than fifteen years back: thus showing that the increase in numbers is solely attributable to a diminished annual mortality. In this country much may still be done to lessen the average mortality, and population will keep increasing at a rapid rate. But when the highest longevity is reached which society is capable of attaining, the increase will appear to be slow. There is, thus, little cause for apprehension relative to future redundancy, if we con-

sider how easy are the means to check population, in case we can bring the habits of all classes exactly to correspond with each other. In laying down rules for the attainment of ultimate ends affecting morals and habits, the difficulties are not so great as they would at first appear. Those maxims, affecting the government of the social system, which meet with general commendation, and which are inculcated in our standard literature, insensibly warp themselves into our thoughts, and, in a large proportion of cases, form the practical rule of life. How many rules respecting social relations appear to bind us with adamantine chains, which are so soft and frail as to be dissipated by a breath whenever public opinion undergoes a change. The same analogy will hold with respect to marriage throughout all gradations of life. Were all the considerations relating to it thoroughly understood, and generally acquiesced in, they would acquire a growing influence, and soon become permanently confirmed, acting in such an efficacious manner as to secure general benefit. By degrees every person would learn his proper rule of conduct in respect to this most important step in life, which would continue to spread, both in precept and in action, until all were included within the circle of its salutary operation.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE CHARITABLE SUPPORT OF THE POOR.

NOTWITHSTANDING every pains which may be taken to promote the welfare of the working classes, it is to be feared that, for a long period to come, there must be an extended call for charity upon the wealthier orders of society. This consideration gives rise to one of the most important questions in civil polity—whether or not the poor should be supported by compulsory contributions? We shall investigate the point under three heads: first, as to the right of the poor to receive assistance; secondly, as to the justice of the better classes contributing according to their means; thirdly, as to the expediency of the state making charity a public or national object.

SECTION I.

Right of the Poor to receive Assistance.

THE right of the poor to receive support is one of those questions which it would be prudent to moot as seldom as possible. Cases are frequent in politics, in which the discussion of abstract points gives rise to angry feelings, without being productive of any

practical good. It can answer little useful purpose to set the interests, or the fancied interests, of the lower classes in opposition to those of the rich. A spontaneous and kindly charity may by these means be converted into a reluctant and sullen contribution; and the reciprocal feelings of good brotherhood, which ought to exist amongst all branches of the same great national family, may be converted into distrust and rancour. But though this consideration is sufficient to check frequent discussion, yet it is proper to have definite ideas on the mind in every extended enquiry.

According to the principles hitherto elucidated, it will probably be admitted, without further argument, that the basis of a judicious social system should secure to the poor sufficient food for their support. Before investigating this point in detail, it may be necessary to enumerate the various classes that from time to time seek eleemosynary assistance. In every country the poor may be divided into three great classes: first, those who are unable to work or to perform any services for themselves; secondly, those who are able to work, but who cannot procure employment from imprudent conduct, or from bad character; thirdly, those who are meritorious, but who cannot procure employment from the stagnation of commerce.

In the first class there may be several species: those incapable of labour from acute and temporary disease, from the weakness of infancy, from the natural decrepitude of old age, or from deformity or

bodily infirmity of any kind. In regard to these there is little difference of opinion, and there seems a general willingness to give support to all. Epidemic diseases cannot be foreseen, and if suffered to exist and spread amongst the lower classes, the community in general would suffer; the wealthier classes, therefore, for their own sakes are called upon to interfere, and to bear the expense of hospitals, and such institutions, to receive the poorer classes whenever afflicted with severe disease. In regard to those who are permanently disabled, or who labour under repulsive infirmities, it is to be feared that private sympathy would soon be exhausted; and, indeed, it is not seemly nor conducive to public morality to permit these persons to exhibit their deformity in order to elicit alms.

The second class, or those who are guilty of misconduct, may be quickly disposed of. It certainly never could be intended in any well-governed state, to allow the sturdy vagrant, or the vicious and improvident, to feed upon the earnings of the industrious classes. It is no doubt a difficult object to deal with those persons according to their deserts; but so far as the present object is concerned, it may be unequivocally decided that they have no abstract right to receive support.

The question then is reduced to a narrow compass, and we have only to consider whether or not the able-bodied poor, who are not blameable for any actual misconduct, should receive gratuitous assistance. As a matter of right, if all the circumstances

be fairly and impartially weighed, it would seem that the answer must be given in the affirmative. The various regulations, the changes of commercial law, the alterations of duties and channels of commerce, which from time to time take place in legislation, are quite out of the control of the working classes. If distress arise, they themselves are hardly to blame; they cannot control the revolutions of trade, the devastations of war, natural calamities, or the improvidence of governments—at times no less extensively destructive. As passive instruments they are obliged to follow, and their destiny, whether for good or for evil, is scarcely in their own keeping; it must depend upon accident and the diversified motives which may please to actuate the better classes of society. It is quite possible, therefore, for extreme distress to prevail, without the smallest impeachment of their prudence or forethought. In this case it would be rigid and unjust to punish them for the acts of others. It would indeed be worse, it would be adding ingratitude to injustice. At pleasure, and when it suits the purpose of the state, it uses these persons at its will, and violates their personal liberty. It forces them by ballot to serve in the militia, and to fight the public battles; it compels them to man the national fleets; it levies taxes upon them in their prosperity; and when the hour of adversity arrives, surely, after having used them forcibly and unconsulted at the public volition, it would not be just to abandon them to utter destitution. So long as a man is willing and

ready to offer his services, and to say, I am desirous to work, and to perform to the utmost of my ability, the other branches of the community are called upon to support him. He offers in exchange the only thing he can give, his labour; and the state, having established artificial regulations for the purpose of supporting the gradations of rank, should grant in exchange a fair equivalent for that labour, not probably equal to what it would produce if left to its own accord in an ordinary state of commerce, but certainly sufficient for existence.

Section II.

Justice of all Classes contributing according to their means.

Before deciding upon the question respecting the propriety of causing all parties to contribute to the support of the poor according to their means, it is necessary to refer to the comparative advancement of society. In young nations, and in many parts not thickly peopled, or where the complicated relations of commerce have not extended, there can be no doubt that poor rates are an evil; they chill the kindlier feelings and charities of life, and prevent the amiable and the virtuous from extending to the unfortunate that practical benevolence which is so easily and so advantageously exercised in districts where every individual is in some degree known to

his neighbour. But when civilization and wealth are far advanced, qualities of a more sordid nature unavoidably predominate, and a dependance on private charity becomes impracticable; it would be taxing the benevolent that the selfish should escape; a compulsory contribution then becomes necessary, and the difficulty consists in the mode of its enactment and impartial distribution. Hence, as society advances, there is a material change in the feelings and general principles which actuate the bulk of the people. With a rapid diffusion of wealth the more selfish feelings gain ground; the benevolent feel that in alleviating distress, which even in the most prosperous society must be more or less prevalent, they are contributing beyond their just proportion; and thus, for the sake of justice, a call must be made, and enforced upon all who seek to avoid participating in disbursements which are probably inseparable from the identical state of things, or organization of industry, to which their own ease or comparative comfort is traceable. When society is less advanced, the desire to assuage the sufferings of the unfortunate seems a universal impulse. Improvement awakens new sentiments, but it also deadens old ones, and sometimes there is no occasion to be proud of the change. The same feeling which prompts to the lavish entertainment at the social board, is equally open to the calls of want. Hospitality and charity dwell together, they are twin sisters, and inseparably accompany the early period of a people's career, though as society advances their influence is impaired. This reflection

must not, nevertheless, engross all our admiration for the primitive ages; civilization rouses the most valuable faculties of the mind, and it may be assumed that the aggregate good far surpasses the aggregate evil. All parts of the United Kingdom have certainly passed that period when the early virtues are chiefly conspicuous; and even in Ireland, where no compulsory rates prevail, charity is not now a universal feeling. It is hardly to be imagined that any person should starve from absolute want; and the support of the poor in that country, much heavier in its pressure than is generally conceived, considerably increases absenteeism: it falls upon the resident inhabitants, while those most able to pay are removed from the disagreeable importunities of the beggars, and contribute nothing.

Even when the disposition to private charity is favourable, occasional caprice in its exercise seems associated with high refinement of manners. A deceptive or prepossessing appearance in the object seeking assistance, rather than a patient examination into character, generally determines the extent of the relief. A well told tale, which the hearer rarely thinks of investigating, sometimes succeeds where real distress, silent from the consciousness of suffering, fails. The temper of mind, besides, in which the donor may be at the time of solicitation, and numberless such circumstances, depending upon accident or passion, renders individual charity fickle and indiscriminating. Most persons giving alms act on the impulse of the moment; they are powerfully

moved by what appears novel and peculiar in suffering; and they too frequently turn a deaf ear to trite appeals relating to the miseries of ordinary life. In active benevolence there is nothing attractive; certainly nothing that is shewy or alluring. The touching woe which draws forth a sigh on the perusal of tales of fancy, is very different from the wretchedness found in the gloomy and squalid abodes of real indigence; and it has long been remarked that quick sensibility displayed in the drawing-room, in respect to the former, is rarely conjoined with practical benevolence, which will encounter much irksome disagreeableness in relieving the latter. Recent reports of different societies, in opulent towns in Scotland, and in other places, where efforts have been made to suppress mindicity, corroborate these objections against individual charity. In every case indiscriminate private alms giving is complained of as distributing assistance unequally, inducing a feeling of servility, and encouraging dissimulation and knavery.

Section III.

Expediency of making Charity a national object.

In regard to the expediency of supporting the poor by a public contribution, the general effects of such a measure are to be considered; and also, how far gratuitous assistance adds to the number of the claimants. Though the principle of rendering relief to paupers

is said to destroy feelings of personal independance, and to make charity less humiliating in the eyes of the labourers generally, many circumstances have hitherto contributed to prevent this injurious operation. On the whole, this country, for upwards of two centuries, has been in a progressive state of improvement. Extensive wastes have been brought into cultivation, and commerce has extended itself to the furthest extremities of the earth, engendering numerous excitements to industry. In many points the condition of the lower classes is materially improved, and numberless articles of consumption are now held indispensable to their comfort, which to their ancestors were unknown. It is evident, therefore, that up to a certain time, notwithstanding the many evils attributable to a system of public charity, there must have been some redeeming advantages. Those evils, besides, in modern discussion, are constantly assumed to belong to the general principle of public charity, and not as they ought to be to that particular exemplification of the principle which is presented by the English poor laws. The present object is not to discuss the propriety of these laws, but the expediency, in the abstract, of providing support for the poor. The use of a thing, it need hardly be observed, is very different from its abuse; and so many evils have grown up connected with parish regulations, that few persons can abstract their thoughts sufficiently to dwell upon the principle of the question without attending to details which are superinduced and objectionable. Mankind

are ever prone to pass unlimited condemnation upon an institution the moment abuses become conspicuous; but this is going too far; the wisest laws may be perverted; and the changes of commerce, manners, and customs, may call for modifications to suit the altered relations of society without impugning the wisdom of the primary enactment. Regarding the general question in this point of view, the expediency of establishing a system of public charity in all parts of the United Kingdom, seems to be borne out on the following grounds.

The constant demands for parish rates, exacted as a right, and frequently paid with extreme reluctance, necessarily call, as Mr. M'Culloch has well illustrated, for a rigid scrutiny into the nature of the institution itself, and the means of preventing its extreme pressure. It has been observed that, owing to this circumstance, farms in England are on a larger scale than in most countries; the land is not cut up into triangular patches, where the labourer endeavours to keep a cow half-fed, lives in misery himself, and brings into the world an offspring again tending to a further injurious division of the land.

The second advantage consists in establishing a high natural or habitual rate of wages. A labourer in Ireland lives on potatoes, in India on rice; but in England custom has decided that he should compass white bread, and occasionally meat, and also that he should be decently clothed. To what cause are these superior habits attributable? It will perhaps be found, waiving any intrinsic superiority of the

English character, that the general consumption of commodities is likely to be carried to a higher pitch by the operation of public contributions for charitable support. Judiciously regulated, the parish allowances tend to preserve, in principle, a high scale of artificial wants, by keeping alive an elevated standard in respect to the habitual consumption of a working man. It may lead to a uniform and regular use of many articles which, were their consumption to cease, would inflict much injury upon many of the productive classes. In regard to the distressed labourers themselves it may also, in many cases, prevent them from sinking into despair, and thus incite them to retain their habits of industry. It is well known that inexorable severity of punishment is not the best adapted for the prevention of crime; so neither is the sudden fall from comparative comfort to hopeless penury the wisest mode to check improvidence.

The remaining advantage consists in suppressing the importunities of beggars, and in abolishing vagrancy in general. These are great objects, and if they can be accomplished without remotely visiting injurious consequences on the general relations of society, an immense benefit is unquestionably attained. Every nation must bestow a certain portion of its annual earnings upon the unfortunate; and before we exclaim against the heavy pressure of parochial contributions, we should make an estimate of the probable outgoings, in case relief were left to individual charity. There is much delusion in expecting

that the community could ever be relieved from these demands; and though the collective amount of a public rate appears formidable in figures, it is quite possible for a large amount to be defrayed in gratuitous alms.

In Ireland the calls for private charity never cease; and many persons would willingly pay double the sum to be relieved from the bold and most annoying importunities of the beggar. The fund, moreover, for defraying this payment would be increased if charity were made a public object in that country. The dissentients to this measure, before they dogmatically decide upon its pernicious consequences, should make an estimate of the effects upon industry derivable from the more general consumption of manufactures and other articles, in consequence of a higher standard of artificial wants being established for the labouring population generally. It is probable, if this and other circumstances were fairly and abstractedly considered, that the expediency of public charities would be admitted. The call for them is a proof of the commercial advancement of a people which the future history of Europe will evince. Whether or not the English poor laws is a wise system, or a judicious exemplification of the general principle, is a very different question.

CHAPTER VI.

ENGLISH POOR LAWS.

SECTION I.—*History.*

THE system of providing support for the poor originated in the early periods of the Christian church. A large sum for the redemption of souls was levied by the clergy, who received it in the capacity of guardians or treasurers to the poor. In the progress of time contributions, at first specifically defined, became more general; and, on the part of the religious institutions, the distribution of the fund assumed a more discretionary character. At an early period in the history of the English church, there are complaints that funds given for the support of the poor were diverted from their proper channel, and expended in sumptuous entertainments given to the feudal chieftains who, in travelling through the country, rested with their retainers at the abbeys and religious houses.

During the reign of Edward I., when English jurisprudence received so great an accession of wise and judicious enactments, strenuous efforts were

made to check these abuses, and many statutes were passed, regulating the manner in which alms should be given to the poor, the sick, and the feeble. At this period the clergy still continued the guardians of these classes, and they took every pains to inculcate upon their flocks the necessity of alms-giving as a religious duty, and as the means, in many cases, of expiating a life of crime.

This state of things continued, mendicity rather increasing than otherwise, to the reign of Edward III. when many important alterations took place in the social condition of England. It is in this reign that the first statutes appear particularizing the nature of vagrancy, and the measures to be taken for its suppression. By the twenty-third of Edward III., soldiers and sailors, vagrants passing to their homes, and all persons licensed by justices, were protected in gathering alms, and hence the origin of itinerant passes given by magistrates to beggars. During this era, a marked distinction appears to have been made between the impotent poor and sturdy beggars, or those able to work; the former were treated with lenient indulgence, the latter with stern severity. The comparative number of the idle, who travelled about in a state of vagrancy, depended in a great degree upon the political state of the country. In times of war or active commotion the feudal barons kept up a large body of retainers and needy attendants, which rendered the country tolerably free from beggars. In peace these retainers were disbanded,

and from long predatory habits, and being too idle to engage in continuous industry, they moved from place to place, either seeking charity or trusting to opportunities for plunder.

Under Henry VII., when intestine commotions had ceased, the government settled into a regular state, and, when a taste began to diffuse itself for the luxuries and conveniences of life, a great change took place in the condition of the labouring classes. The incentives to industry gave a tone to various artizans, and established a new order of society. But still the innovation, from exciting tumult to monotonous labour, assorted ill with many who could not control their dispositions to settle in regular pursuits. During this and the following reign great numbers continued to receive assistance at the religious houses; and, indeed, at this time, charity was considered a palliative for many vices. The indiscriminate assistance introduced many impositions, not only upon the clergy, but upon the credulous laity, who were totally unable to explain the apparent increase of distress. It was in this condition of things that the suppression of the monasteries took place, and, as may easily be imagined, an extraordinary change ensued in the aspect of the country. It could hardly be supposed that the bulk of the people would immediately emerge from a state of dissolute idleness to one of persevering industry; the preliminary education and materials for its exercise were wanting; and there was thus a vast number of persons thrown quite unprovided for and

defenceless upon the country, unless the government stept in to their assistance. However arbitrary may have been the proceedings which history attaches to the Tudor race, a want of regard for the welfare and happiness of the lower classes of the people can never be included among their demerits. By the twenty-seventh of Henry VIII. it is ordained that all persons in authority shall exhort and move all people to be liberal and bountiful in extending their charitable alms towards the comfort and relief of the indigent and needy classes, and for setting and keeping to work the able poor.

Edward VI. took up the subject with increased zeal, and his reign is memorable for the magnificent endowment of charitable institutions. Notwithstanding this legislative liberality, mendicity continued, and several acts were passed, directing persons to provide cottages for the impotent, and to find work for the able bodied, supplying them with meat and drink; also authorizing any person to take the children of the impotent poor to employ them. It was at this period that the first indication of a compulsory provision for the poor appears; but it is accompanied with all that moderation, in respect to individual property and private rights, which marks the legislation of that time. The uncharitable were at first gently intreated, and then admonished by the clerical authorities, before their stubborn reluctance was reported to the justices, and an attempt made to assess them for a weekly provision.

In the subsequent reign of Elizabeth, incessant efforts were made by her able ministers to check the progress of pauperism. The most sedulous pains appear to have been employed to set the able poor to work; and there are specific enactments, directing that a competent supply of wood, hemp, iron, flax, or other stuff, shall be provided, and committed to the care of collectors and governors appointed by the magistrates. Notwithstanding these exertions, distress amongst the lower classes of society increased, to the great surprise of Elizabeth herself, and also of her ministers, who were well aware that the nation was rapidly increasing in renown and commercial prosperity, and that, consequently, the body of the people, in a collective sense, must be improving. The true cause of the distress arose from the rise of prices in all commodities, consequent upon the discovery of the American mines, and the relative depreciation in the value of money. The currency question was less discussed at least, if not less known, in those days than the present; and as money contracts and the rate of wages remained unchanged for a time, in respect to the nominal price, the lower classes, getting the same money wages, and paying higher prices for the commodities consumed by them, found their condition materially deteriorating. It was to remedy these evils that the renowned ministers of Elizabeth framed the statute, forty-third of her reign, which still continues the general groundwork for all regulations concerning the poor. This

act was collated with the utmost care, and with all that patient research which distinguished the statesmen of that brilliant epoch of English history; and, considering the manner in which, for upwards of five generations, it performed the objects for which it was designed it rarely has had a parallel, for comprehensive wisdom, in the annals of legislation. There can be no doubt that a discriminating principle long prevailed, in carrying its enactments into effect; and while gratuitous support was liberally bestowed to the impotent poor, the able bodied were rigorously confined to hard labour.

The expanding opportunities, yearly arising for the prosecution of commerce, rendered this design comparatively easy for a long time. Pending the civil wars of the seventeenth century, and for some time subsequent to the Restoration, there appears little discussion respecting the poor laws, certainly no sentiment save unequivocal approbation. Several enactments were passed, but they relate rather to criminal vagrancy than to casual pauperism.

During the reign of the first two Georges, an immense number of acts, relative to the law of settlement, and to parochial regulations, were passed. Accidental and precarious charity, agreeably to the principles developed in the last chapter, now began to decline, and a sturdier enforcement of public contribution became indispensable. It would be wrong, therefore, to consider the increase in the rates, from this time forward, as exhibiting a true

criterion of the increase of pauperism; a specific and regulated charitable assistance, falling more equally upon all classes, supplied the place of the precarious charity by which the designing were frequently assisted, while less accomplished beggars severely suffered.

In 1782, the act denominated Gilbert's Act was passed: it was got up with great care, and introduced many important regulations, in respect to details, but little in respect to general principles. It was chiefly directed to the workhouse system, and gave increased facilities to the incorporation of parishes.

From this date to the breaking out of the French revolutionary war, there was rather a diminution of pauperism, attributable to the improving condition of the country under the judicious government of that period. It is probable, also, that when precarious charity ceased, and compulsory payments were stretched to the full extent required for the support of all paupers, that the rate payers, the landlords and occupiers of land, endeavoured to prevent the spread of rural population; conceiving that the erection of cottages, and small holdings of land, must eventually augment a local peasantry devoid of any resource but ordinary labour, and who thus must be unable to support themselves under agricultural depression, or unforeseen vicissitudes. This feeling, it is generally considered, induced them to deny the means of local settlement, which, for a time, tended to increase the number and extent of towns,

where, fortunately, there was a progressive extension of employment.

It is a curious circumstance that, in the whole interval between the commencement of the compulsory system and the termination of the last century, it was considered an undoubted axiom, with exceedingly few dissentients, that population constituted the chief power of a country, and ought to be increased. After the commencement of the French war, great changes took place in our domestic polity; injurious variations in the rate of wages necessarily ensued from the derangement of trade; and, after a brief period of deceitful prosperity, bad harvests appeared, and wages became depressed to an extent quite unparalleled in commercial history. Such unhappily was the case in 1795, when foreign trade was stagnant, and a great advance took place in the price of corn. The cost, indeed, of food, in the aggregate, was virtually doubled; and, as wages continued stationary, the distress was so great as to force a most unusual number of able labourers to apply to the parish for assistance. The magistrates in the southern counties, acting from mistaken benevolence, sought to maintain the former equality between the price of food and the rate of wages; and they formed a scale of remuneration which, in their opinion, a labouring man should receive; directing the parish officer to make up the deficiency to the labourer, in the event of the wages paid him by his employers falling short of the prescribed allowance.

Some time after the introduction of this important regulation, which completely altered the original principle of the poor laws, an act was passed, allowing persons to be relieved at their own houses, in place of the workhouse. This act originated from the great expense and abuses which had crept into those establishments; but it greatly lessened the control of the parish authorities over the paupers, and removed all the terrors of the workhouse from the able bodied, whose invention would have been whetted in case they had had to choose between irksome restraint on the one hand and a little taste of liberty on the other, though the latter might be accompanied with much unnoticed privation.

It is evident that these enactments and parochial regulations caused a complete revolution in the system of labour, both in the towns and in the country; they established a principle of keeping up an artificial rate of wages in parts where labourers were already in excess, and which has continued to grow, notwithstanding every effort in modern times to recur to the original parochial administration: murmurs in the meantime, both on the part of the donor and the receiver, have increased, but the evil itself stalks forward, daily acquiring a more formidable magnitude, both in height and breadth.

Subsequent to the scarcity in 1800, when the poor rates had reached an enormous amount, and when the publication of Mr. Malthus had thrown a new light on the subject of population, the disposition of

the supreme legislature manifested itself in a manner rather different from that of the country magistrates, and became greatly strengthened to check the increase of poor labourers, almost at all hazards. Amid the subsequent din of arms and the exultation of brilliant victories a little time was, however, given; the homely considerations respecting labour were lost sight of; and if the pressure of the poor rates was not less severely felt, it was certainly less discussed.

When peace at length ensued, the subject became pressing; and in 1817 it was brought in a prominent manner before the legislature. A large volume of evidence was collected on this occasion, exhibiting the working of the system in a very comprehensive manner; but, although the committee which investigated the subject published an elaborate report, very little alteration took place in the law itself. Select vestries were established, and greater power was given to the magistrates in petty sessions; a salaried officer, a kind of assistant overseer, in every parish where the majority of the vestry concur in it, was also sanctioned, the committee stating that they recommended this step on the grounds of experience rather than of theory, the practice having been beneficially adopted in many populous parishes.

In 1819, 1826, and 1830, the subject was again brought before the legislature; so increasing in its difficulties as to banish the hope of amendment, like the gradual developement of a fatal disease, each step presenting more alarming symptoms and weakening

the chance of cure. The subject has been fearfully increased by the immigration of Irish labourers into England, and, after a most voluminous examination upon the subject of the introduction of poor laws into Ireland, the legislature has been unable to come to a definite conclusion.

Last year a commission was appointed, with extensive powers to inquire into the local management of the rates, and into all parochial regulations throughout England, but its labours have not yet been laid before the public.

Section II.

Evils.

Judging from the answers given by various witnesses before recent committees of both Houses of Parliament, the objections entertained against the poor laws are quite as great amongst practical parochial authorities as amongst theoretical enquirers. It has, indeed, been recently contended, that it is the abuse of the law, rather than the institution itself, which has occasioned the mischief. The argument respecting the dread of cottages and the creation of small farms, causing landlords to settle a superior description of tenants upon their properties, and thus practically to restrain

the increase of population, has created some reaction, and has induced many intelligent persons to suppose, that could the allowance system, radically bad in principle, be dispensed with, and could the practice of relieving paupers at their own houses be changed, forcing all labourers claiming relief to accept it at the workhouse, the main features of the system might be advantageously retained. But though these gleams of hope prevailed a few years back, yet circumstances still more recent, and the existing feelings of the poor, have utterly destroyed them. It is strenuously urged in opposition, that the breaking up of small farms, particularly in Ireland, has not tended to check pauperism in any one shape; it changes the residence and adds to the recklessness of the dispossessed tenant, but it by no means causes him to delay marriage. It forces him to settle in towns, where probably he congregates in the same room with forty persons, with whom all restraints of modesty are unknown, and sexual intercourse commences at an exceedingly early age. If population in this case be checked, it is from the greater number of deaths, and not from the desirable operation of improved habits; the conversion, therefore, of the turbulent peasant into the depraved town labourer is considered to establish evils greater than those sought to be suppressed. In the crowded state of the lower classes in towns throughout all parts of the empire, the fear of compromising personal independence by receiving gratuitous support, it is urged, has long ceased to operate; the well known maxim

once a pauper, always a pauper appears universally to prevail; and it is therefore contended as a broad principle, notwithstanding every opposing consideration touching justice or humanity, that it is hopeless to escape from the evils of the English poor laws.

It will not be necessary for our purpose to dwell on these conflicting opinions; it is only necessary to discriminate those particular consequences attached to the system which, according to the principles of this work, must continue to be characterized as evils. It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to repeat that the great object coveted is to assimilate the habits of the poor to those of the middle classes. There is no prohibition against marriage; it is only desired that the labourers should be governed by the same principles in this respect as actuate their employers. If a person in the middle sphere of life choose to marry without possessing the ability to maintain a family, he is at perfect liberty to do so, but he must suffer for his indiscretion. Let the same principle be applied to the labourer; and it is obvious that the morbid sensibility sometimes affected to be felt concerning the cruel restraint assumed to be imposed upon him must be at an end. If 25 be the marrying age for a person in the middle sphere, let the same rule be applied to the labourer; but do not justify him if he marry at 19 or 20. According to these principles, it will appear that the evils of the English poor laws, which deserve our immediate animadversion, do not differ very widely in

their nature from these which popular writers have long depicted in terms of indignant condemnation.

In the first place, these laws obviously inculcate upon the labouring population generally, that there is no occasion to put any restraint upon their inclinations, or to exercise any degree of forethought or prudence in marriage; because the parish is bound to provide both for themselves and their rising family. There is no incentive to cultivate habits of economy, or to lay up savings for future exigencies. To increase and multiply is with them the sole end of life, because it increases the parish allowance; and with such feelings it is not surprising that the proportion of labourers to the demand for their services is soon deranged.

In the second place, they teach habits of improvidence; and thus prevent that nice husbanding of resources which at all times is so necessary in a commercial nation. When a deficient crop occurs, it is peculiarly important that general economy should be practised, or in other words that every individual should be frugal and consume less than his customary allowance. It is by these means that the nation must preserve her resources unimpaired. When commercial vicissitudes diminish production, or, which is the same thing, diminish the equivalents procured in exchange, the consumption should be proportionably diminished, or it is manifest the national capital must be trenched upon and lessened. But the poor

laws, from want of a discriminating principle, act in a direction exactly contrary. At a time when all master manufacturers are reducing their expenditure in order to resume production with fresh zeal and undiminished alacrity, so soon as the commercial cloud blows over, the labourers, by means of parish allowances, find their condition unchanged; and proceed in their consumption as if the fund out of which their maintenance is defrayed were unchanged and inexhaustible.

In the third place, the English poor laws place the industrious and the well disposed on the same footing as the idle and the depraved; and they thus establish an equality of wages between two most opposite classes. It is obvious that, so long as a man can go to the parish and demand his allowance, there is no difference whatever between the comparative advantages enjoyed by the deserving and the undeserving, there is no stimulus to cheer meritorious exertion; and discredit is thrown upon virtue itself by not palpably bestowing upon it superior reward.

In the fourth place, the inequality of wages between the married and the single, established by the poor laws, is productive of the most pernicious consequences. Were we to purchase an article at a shop, or to give an order to any master tradesman, we should feel surprised if an additional demand were made upon us because these individuals were burthened with families. We consider that for every article there is a fixed price, and with that understanding

we are satisfied, without inquiring into the domestic economy of the vendor. Why should we act differently with the labourer? If the remuneration for services generally were adjusted to the same scale as his; if a married merchant got better prices than a bachelor for his wares, or a married lawyer a better fee; then there would be less objection to the existing system of labourers' wages. The world would be peopled sooner; we should require our geometrical increase of scientific labour sooner; but this would be all; we should still preserve the advantageous relations of society, and the evils would be trivial compared to those now exhibited.

In the fifth place, the moral evils of the English poor laws present probably the most fruitful theme for censure. The benign influence of charity is converted into a source of discord; all bonds of union between the labourers and the better classes are severed asunder; sullen discontent is engendered; and a general disposition to cherish envy, malice, and hatred, seems every where to increase, threatening to subvert the most cherished institutions of society. Self respect, laudable emulation, and the endearments of family intercourse, are quite at an end; and with this gloomy prospect darkening the picture, both in the foreground and in the distance, it is certainly not surprising that condemnation against the system should be vehement.

Many more evils might be enumerated were the received doctrine respecting population admitted;

but those simply have been stated which appear to be borne out by our own theory. To correct evils so long established, and at the same time to secure the advantages relative to public charity in the abstract, described in the fifth chapter, is no doubt a formidable undertaking; but there is greater likelihood of succeeding if we fairly set forth the difficulties. Our principle is, that mankind can continue indefinitely to increase and to participate in superior gratifications, provided certain relations in the various orders are preserved. To accomplish this end there are, as formerly explained, two modes of operation. In the following chapter we shall point out the first, or the means by which the labouring classes will be induced to practise the same restraint in marriage as the middle orders. In the next chapter we shall point out the means by which employment for the labourers, at their own option, can be enlarged, so that they will have a constant incentive to better their condition. And, in the succeeding chapter, we shall exhibit the means through which these great principles may act reciprocally upon each other, by strengthening the feeling of self respect.

CHAPTER VII.

MEANS OF ESTABLISHING PRUDENTIAL RESTRAINT IN REGARD TO MARRIAGE AMONGST THE LABOURERS.

SECTION I.—*General arrangement for the correction of Pauperism.*

IN an early part of our undertaking we stated, that the great object to be accomplished by the legislature was, in the immediate instance, to get rid of the redundant population; and, secondly, to provide means for preventing the recurrence of so great an evil. The latter object, containing the grand difficulty in the question, merits prior consideration; as there can be little doubt that if satisfactory principles were once recognized here, few obstacles would present themselves in preparing the way for a fair trial of an improved system. The reader, therefore, is requested to keep constantly present to his thoughts that, in the plan we are about to develope, we assume that the redundant population is removed, and that we have, as it were, to start afresh, and unencumbered by pressing disadvantages, which long abuse has engendered. In the present depraved condition of the

labouring classes, any plan, however wise in its regulation, or benevolent in its intention, would hardly have fair play; the motives probably would be misinterpreted, and the execution perverted. But if a large number of persons be removed, causing wages, from natural circumstances, to reach a reasonable rate, the feelings of the working classes will undergo a change, and we are justified in believing that they will strike in harmoniously with any enlightened plan that seems to promise success. To influence them by the same considerations of moral restraint as actuate the middle classes, or, in other words, to prevent the increase of their numbers beyond the rate which the industry of a country can support, must produce an entire revolution in their social economy. We have to effect a change in their manners, habits, and feelings; we have to render mendicity shameful and opprobrious; to create steady habits of application; and to rouse a sense of pride, rendering every labouring man desirous of being well thought of by his fellows. We have to establish proper notions of prudence and practical economy, leaving men to adapt their ends judiciously to their means, and spontaneously to vary the rate of their living according to the varying rate of wages, dependant upon the fluctuating circumstances of the country. We have to inculcate salutary maxims of forethought, causing men in the days of temporary prosperity, and in a single state of life, to hoard up some savings to provide for the additional expense which a family will bring upon them.

It will aid us in our endeavours to accomplish this end, and it will also tend to perspicuity, to consider for a moment certain relations which exist between different classes of the lower orders.

It is generally considered that in bestowing eleemosynary relief only two parties are interested: the donor and the receiver. But, in reality, a third class is deeply concerned: that class of the industrious labourers actually employed, or just one step above those receiving relief. The rich man giving a charity parts with that which he can easily spare: the mendicant receives a boon which in all probability enables him to live in idleness, enjoying the same fare as the mass of the working classes; but the industrious labourer, constrained to work, is not only placed upon the same footing with the pauper, and seemingly mocked for his folly in sacrificing ease to procure the same thing which others procure gratuitously, but is deeply injured by the pauper's unproductive expenditure. When paupers in idleness receive the means of subsistence, it is important to reflect that it diminishes the funds devoted to the support of industry, and it thus eventually robs the industrious labourers of the means of earning their own livelihood. The expenditure of the rich, when directed in a natural channel, is employed in consuming articles produced by the working classes generally. A gentleman, for example, gives twenty pounds in charity to support a pauper who consumes nothing beyond the lowest description of sustenance, giving no play to

the diversified operations of manufacturing commerce. Had that twenty pounds been expended in administering to the wants of the donor himself, it would have given encouragement to some branch of manufacture, of which the working classes actually employed must have derived the benefit. Besides this obstruction to the increase of national wealth, and the injury inflicted on the labouring classes generally, there is prospectively a deeper mischief. Paupers breed quite as prolifically as any other description of people. There is, therefore, a constant supply of new hands, and the workman, in addition to the loss caused by the absorption of funds which ought to be devoted to the maintenance of industry, finds that out of the undissipated residue he obtains diminished remuneration, because competitors are incessantly arising to constrain him to work on lower terms. It is no wonder, therefore, that poverty once fairly settled in a land acts with accelerated influence, and gradually widens the circle until almost all the population are drawn within it. The manufactures required by the wealthy decrease with increase of pauperism; and as no nation can spend more than it produces, whenever the expenditure largely consists in administering gratuitous subsistence to the lower orders, the condition of all classes of the people must deteriorate. In this progressive decline no class will suffer so deeply, or will be soon affected, as that class earning their own subsistence, but just on the verge of pauperism; and, indeed, the

position is universal, that, viewing the labouring classes generally, the interests of those who labour, and of that portion of them who live in idleness, are diametrically opposed to each other.

It is, therefore, the great basis of our plan to bring those two parties into contact with each other. It is proposed, in every case, to bring a pauper before a jury of workmen, of precisely the same class in life as himself, who will decide upon his case, investigate the urgency of his claim, prescribe to him the nature of the work he must perform, and mete out the description and quantity of food which he is entitled to receive.

In each parish, or some other local division, according to circumstances, a certain number of workmen should be selected, either by rotation or otherwise, and according to their character for industrious habits, discretion, and proper feelings, who should investigate all cases of vagrancy and pauperism that occurred within the parish. These juries should be composed of persons but in a very slight degree above the pauper whom they judged; they should be on the verge themselves; that is to say, that class, of all others, most interested in the suppression of mendicity. The jurors should be nominated in such a manner as palpably to strike the observation of the pauper, that the investigation of his misfortune or delinquency proceeded with the utmost impartiality. Sobriety, good conduct, and superior intelligence, should alone recommend them; and it would be

expedient to give a small pecuniary assistance out of a fund, hereafter to be described, in lieu of lost time, for their attendance.

The mode of proceeding would naturally bear a resemblance to a court of justice. A permanent officer in each parish or district, liberally educated, well versed in political economy, and possessing firmness and decision, tempered with humanity, should preside as judge. It would be his province to have the pauper brought before the jury, to keep proper decorum, and to explain to all parties the relations in which they stood to each other; making the jury, in the first place, properly acquainted with their functions, and, secondly, letting the pauper know that his fate rested with men of his own condition, who could either grant him relief or consign him to hard labour, according to his deserts. A code of laws would be required, concise and simple, which, in a short time, would become understood by all classes.

On a former occasion the objects seeking relief were specifically enumerated; at present we may consider them under the same three classes,—first, the aged, infirm, and impotent poor generally; second, the industrious accidentally thrown out of employment; third, the idle or the vagrant. To uphold in the labourer the feeling of self-respect, it ought to be a fundamental principle, that the maintenance of a man thrown upon the parish should be of inferior description to that of those in active employment. No matter how great the pressure, or how mean

the fare, generally in use by the labouring classes, a man receiving charity should live still lower than he who is struggling, of his own accord, to maintain independence. Contentment in life is altogether comparative; and to let the labourer view the condition of the pauper with dread, would go a great way to make him prudent, before he ventured on the charge of a family.

Supposing the condition of the labourer actually employed superior to that of the same class in other counties, the operation of the proposed plan might, in its working, be particularly humane, notwithstanding the apparent harshness with which the pauper was treated. He would still receive relief sufficient for subsistence; he would find his condition enviable, when contrasted with the starvation and misery prevailing in other countries; and yet, to his own fellow labourers at home, in employment, he might seem to suffer much privation. The object is simply to provide the means for establishing these necessary gradations. Labourers, themselves working laboriously, will never think of meting out to paupers too large a scale of allowance, when it is left to their own option to decide upon the nature of the work, the description of the food, and the mode of receiving it. They will frame a scale of expenditure adapted to all the classes; increasing or decreasing in liberality, according to the merit or previous conduct of the applicant. By confining the maintenance of the pauper decidedly within such limits as can be compassed by the lowest description of labour in

actual employment in the neighbourhood, the line of proceeding is clear and definite. If the common labourer spend fifteen shillings a week in subsistence, then that of the pauper, in case he is blameable for improvidence, should be limited to twelve shillings, or less, as the case may be. If the one partake of comforts, such as tea and coffee, the efficient pauper should participate in no such enjoyment.

This system of strict discrimination and severe vigilance would not, in the slightest degree, militate against the purely unfortunate. The jury would have power to exercise indulgence; a deserving man, deprived of work by unmerited distress, would meet with sympathy; and it is proper that the jury should have power to exercise so laudable a feeling. Amongst the lower classes there is no want of sympathy; and the connecting ties of brotherhood possess a moral charm which cannot be too indefatigably strengthened. The social circle is drawn closer and closer, and a double value is given to the pecuniary gift. On the other hand, in cases of incorrigible vagrancy, some punishment should follow conviction, and no punishment is so much dreaded as steady and constant labour. Solitary confinement sometimes might be properly resorted to; and these considerations, relative to the time and manner of compensation for previous idleness, should be left to the free discretion of the jury, who, under the authority and admonition of the person presiding, should possess the power of sentencing the vagrant to one week, one month, or

three months labour or confinement, according to the turpitude of the case.

When and how often the jurors should assemble must naturally depend on circumstances; that plan should be pursued which would best accommodate all parties, and least interrupt the operations of industry, or interfere with the business of manufacturers or farmers, whose workmen or labourers might be called to act as jurors. At first, no doubt, difficulties would be encountered; but if the principle of the measure be sound, the cases for investigation would speedily diminish; and, besides, experience would sharpen the faculties of the jurors, and lead to greater facility in the dispatch of business. It might be expedient to subdivide the business of the parishes or districts in which many paupers domiciled, both to prevent the abstraction of too many persons from their work, and to administer either relief or punishment with promptness. The jurors being paid but a small sum for attendance, many of them might not wish to be taken from their daily labour, at the same time that they would be anxious to procure as extra earnings the reward given for their attendance. It might, on this account, be expedient to assemble in some places in the evening, thus equally accommodating the labourers, and avoiding the repugnance which manufacturers and farmers sometimes feel to have their workmen taken from their employment during business hours. The district or division from which jurors should be selected, ought to be small,

cementing as strongly as possible neighbourly feelings, and bringing all the inhabitants under the eye of each other. By this plan a disorderly person would soon be discovered, and hunted out from one quarter to another, until at last he must be brought up for judgment before his fellows, and consigned to due punishment.

It is presumable that once approving of the measure in principle, all classes of the community would join their voluntary exertions to forward its execution. The sums which they now bestow in indiscriminate charity, calling forth the revolting display of hypocrisy and fraud, would be differently directed: and, sensible that every exertion on their part was attended with real benefit, they would use their utmost exertions to enlighten all those dependent upon them, and thus to aid the operation of the plan. To abolish feelings of morbid sensibility, and to establish the sturdier agency of self-interest, is at all times conducive to efficient management; and if we mistake not, every individual hiring labourers would find his means of discipline improve according to his co-operating zeal, while the labourer himself would most seriously meditate on his conduct, and become deeply impressed with the value of a good character.

Let us fancy for a moment our plan in operation. The court is opened, the judge presides, the jury is assembled; whether or not the mystical number of twelve be retained is not important. A pauper is brought up for examination; if belonging to the class

of the impotent poor, the case would be easily disposed of; there would be no want of sympathy, and the jury would merely have to attend to the actual rate of wages, and the cost of food, and would award a corresponding allowance to the pauper.

If belonging to the second class, there is little doubt that every disposition to lenity would be shewn; the judge would address the jury in these terms:—"This is a case, jurymen, demanding your sympathy; all men are liable to misfortune; each of you from some unforeseen calamity might be deprived of customary earnings; sickness might overtake you; your employer might die or fail in his business; and thus, from misfortunes beyond your own control, you would be reduced to extreme indigence. I need not inculcate that you should act to others as you would wish others to act towards you; and, therefore, in this case you should be indulgent, and allot liberal relief to this deserving though unfortunate man." An appeal so made could hardly fail to produce the desired effect, and assistance would be given to the individual, not only adequate, but even with delicacy, to soothe his feelings, and to save him from the humiliating tyranny of overseers.

If the case belonged to the third class, a bad character, or a vagrant, the line of proceeding would be exactly opposite. The judge would say to the jury —"You are aware, jurymen, how severely you labour, and how comparatively scanty is your fare; it is a great mistake to attribute either of these circumstances to

the institutions of the country, to the illiberality of your employers, or to a desire amongst any portion of the better classes to oppress you. These classes would assist you if they could; they would rejoice, most fervently rejoice, if your condition could be bettered, but how is it to be done? In this country a certain quantity of commodities is annually produced, which has to be divided amongst the different classes. Every person spending his income must give encouragement to those engaged in this production. As for example, when money is spent on clothing or on furniture, the labourers who produce that clothing and furniture, must obtain their wages and be benefited. But if, in place of this advantageous consumption, the money is spent in retaining such objects as you see before you in idleness, there must be a deficiency somewhere; there must be a less sum devoted to your own support, jurymen, and the industrious classes to which you belong. Even this is not all; there must be a greater number of competitors amongst you, and your wages will consequently be lower, from these paupers increasing population, reckless of consequences. The true cause, therefore, of your privations proceeds from the existence of this class before you. Whatever is given to this pauper would be spent in some description of manufacture, produced by you or your fellows, and you are deprived of so much means to ameliorate your own condition. Your employers, perhaps, gave to some amongst you this morning fifteen yards of cloth

to weave; were it not for this improvident race of idlers that quantity might have been twenty:—you are allowed a penny a yard for weaving; were it not again for the recklessness of these people, that price might be three half-pence; because, in consequence of their imprudent marriages, your ranks are recruited from an inferior class, who depress your earnings to the scantiest scale. Hesitate then not an instant to check these injuries; and, since this pauper has himself to blame in seeking assistance, consign him to labour, and allot an allowance of food adapted to his proper situation."

It would appear, from this attempt graphically to sketch our plan, that means for discrimination are not only provided for generally, but also for every shade of difference in each particular class. A mighty reforming spirit would therefore arise, working constantly, efficaciously, and stretching its influence to all parts of the United Kingdom.

In the first place, let us attend to the effect produced upon the jurors and the working classes generally. By maxims regularly and habitually inculcated upon them in the most impressive and palpable manner, they will become effectually undeceived in respect to that fatal opinion prevalent among the lower orders of society, that the interests of the rich are opposed to those of the poor. Far from harbouring in their bosoms, jealousy, distrust, and often malignant hatred against their superiors, they will become sensible of the proper gradations of society,

and will strive to strengthen the social union. In the frequent assembling of juries, how many all important and practical lessons in political economy will be unfolded. The workman will be taught the true causes which limit the demand for his services; he will stretch his mind gradually to ascertain the reason why wages are low; and he will cease to abuse and be guilty of riots against his master, when he learns that he is, like himself, but an instrument in the hands of others, and that a low reward for labour is consequent on a stagnant demand for goods. Above all, correct principles, in regard to population, will become disseminated. By degrees, the necessity of having some fund previous to marriage will be firmly established, and savings will be carefully preserved as a store for future contingencies, and to prevent the ignominy of charitable maintenance. The labourer will learn to depend exclusively on himself for support, and will be inspired with ardour to better his condition. In one word, order, sobriety, exertion, enterprize, comfort, buoyant hope, will succeed to turbulence, drunkenness, idleness, sloth, privation, irremediable despair.

Let us now view the other class, who from depraved habits prefer begging, either by wholesale or retail, to any species of work. We place those persons under the eye of men separated from themselves, not in rank, but in character. In depicting tales of fictitious woe, they have met with examiners who know how the poor live, and who can detect their

fraud. The rich frequently display an astonishing ignorance regarding the habits of the indigent; hence the chief cause of imposture. But the plan proposed employs efficacious means to penetrate into every recess, and to strip off every garb which hypocrisy can assume. Condemnation too is received with greatly altered feelings. The rich are regarded as a different race, uninfluenced by sympathy, and all admonitions from them pass unheeded: but punishment coming from an equal, strikes home, and if there be a sense of shame left, it will be roused and held vividly in the thoughts, emphatically whispering amendment.

In the scale of allowances given to all classes of the paupers, we behold similar advantages. What endless discussion, irritation, and suspicion, together with lasting discontent, are engendered between the overseers and the paupers in fixing charitable allowances! All is occasioned by the want of a proper community of interest between the parties; but according to the plan proposed, no difficulty ensues; the matter is out of the hands of the rich, and that scale is provided which is suited to the existing state of prices, and the demand for labour; and which, therefore, is the most advantageous to the community at large.

It is natural to suppose that, when an elevated tone is given to the calling of industrious labour, no matter how humble, a material improvement will take place in personal habits. A wish will arise to procure, not only substantial comforts, but all the out-

ward appearance of display which commands regard from the world. Let a line of demarcation be drawn between the industrious and the idle, granting the one privileges, consigning the other to hardships, and the labourers generally will be anxious to possess those palpable types of industry, in regard to personal appearance and mode of life, which would make their qualifications for jurors manifest to all.

In the present state of commercial knowledge, it is not probable that objections will be urged against raising the rate of labour. The master and the workman, however seemingly their interests may be regarded as separate, are in reality closely connected. Cheapness is but relative; and could the manufacturers view the improvement in the condition of their operatives with a statesman's eye, they would discover advantage, and not injury, in widening the range of general expenditure. The danger of combination has long ceased, and workmen are now aware that they themselves suffer from all attempts, whether violent or passive, to arrest the operations of trade. They may unite with the master manufacturers, and combine against unproductive consumers; but in respect to the single effort to force higher wages, it is the general belief, in all manufacturing districts, that it is not possible to unite, with any prospect of ultimate success. Every time, indeed, a jury was assembled, they would be taught a practical lesson against the folly of combination, or to view wages in any other light than as a voluntary contract between

parties whose interest tends to a common centre. They would soon ascertain that the general fund for the maintenance of their entire class cannot be increased without a corresponding increase in some description of labour; they must, therefore, quickly perceive that any step of theirs, which arrested the progress of production, must diminish this fund; and thus, there being less general wealth in the country, while unproductive consumption on their part proceeded unabated, the longer they continued exorbitant or refractory, the more surely would subsequent privations overtake them. Besides, no persons know better than the operatives that, in the natural course of trade, if any unfortunate collision take place between them and their employers, it is sure to drive business to other quarters. In more cases than one, in times when the subject was imperfectly understood, workmen who had struck their work in particular places were instantaneously brought to their senses on learning that extensive orders had been transferred to distant towns. The weavers of Manchester have thus their attention fixed upon their brethren of Glasgow; and knowing that trade is too diversified, and stretches over too many branches, to admit of a more extensive combination than what can attach to a town or local district, they soon learn wisdom, and are anxious to retain employment in particular places, rather than disperse it by impolitic struggles.

But though the danger of combinations is ob-

viated by the increasing intelligence of workmen, and by the means devised to teach them their true position and relative duties, a silent, progressive, and salutary rise of wages would take place in the working of our plan, from the diminishing number of competitors, and from the gradual extension of employment, consequent on the correction of pauperism. The workmen would discover, that their comparative comforts or prosperity depended on the collective habits of their class; and that there were no limits to the remuneration for labour, provided there were, on the one hand, extending commerce, and on the other, fewer persons to labour. Altered views would immediately arise, and, associated with the improvement in worldly circumstances, a moral amelioration would also appear, softening and modifying the former, and teaching courtesy of manners without the servility of abject dependence.

It will always be remembered, that a controlling power is vested with the better classes, in consequence of their naming the jurors. This secures, at all times, proper subordination, and sentiments of reciprocal duty, which prevents any separation of interests, or the working classes attempting, exclusively or peremptorily, to control their own affairs. The object is to single out the best disposed and most meritorious amongst the workmen as jurors of their fellows; but the mode of accomplishing this in detail will, perhaps, be better appreciated after some local regulations of the plan have been described.

Section II.

District or Parochial Regulations.

In the regulations for the plan proposed, it would be expedient to prescribe a distinct and definite line of duties to every officer or person in any way interested in the working of the measure. A division of labour is at all times desirable, but never more so than when multifarious duties are presented for performance, without each individual being aware of his responsibility, or of what immediately relates to his province. Two classes of persons now actively interfere in the concerns of the poor, without very exact notions of their duties: these are the clergy and the magistracy; and it would seem expedient, for many weighty reasons, to make the new institution a distinct concern, unconnected with either of these classes.

It is derogatory to the dignity of the clerical character to interfere executively in matters which, at times, necessarily give rise to excitement, and probably ill will. Under any circumstances, it appears inexpedient to associate the duties of religion with those of surveyors, overseers, and justices, or any of those functions of office which relate to matters of civil or municipal agency. The stir and bustle of diversified offices, on the part of the clergy-

man, militate against the sacredness of his character. It is his province to labour more for the prevention of crime than for its punishment; it is for him to relieve the sick, to console the afflicted, to teach the aged resignation, to examine the various seminaries for moral and religious instruction, and to instil principles of piety into the young of both sexes; it should be his vocation to give advice where required, and to establish amongst all classes, who are the objects of his care, a bond of reciprocal feeling and attachment. Under these circumstances, the more he appears as a friendly counsellor, and the less as a severe functionary, the greater will be his influence; and it is, therefore, inexpedient to seek his active interference in the immediate execution of matters connected with pauperism.

With regard to the magistracy, it is also desirable that they should merely act as visitors, superintending part of the operation of the proposed measure, but without attempting to execute the multifarious duties now prescribed to them. It is quite impossible that the whole of the services, at present provided by law, relative to the poor laws, could be properly performed by justices of the peace. The real business of charity requires qualifications very different from those commonly possessed by individuals in this condition of society; it would therefore be expedient to remove entirely from them most of the duties relative to the management of the poor now required; nor is it likely that, by this step, these

functionaries could complain of any abridgment of their privileges. No such consequence is meditated. The object is to elevate, not to detract from, their high responsibility of office; to secure to them the gratitude and reverence of the poor, never their hatred or malediction. We leave them still the guardians of the law, whose proper province it is to aid the exertions of others when civil authority is necessary, in either apprehending vagrants, or in condemning them to punishment; and in thus making the operation of charity, and every thing relating to the prevention or suppression of pauperism, a purely fiscal proceeding, requiring magisterial aid, only when civil authority is necessary, we relieve the magistrates from drudgery, irksome and repulsive in itself, and which, from their station in life, they are unable to discharge.

Dividing thus the various administrative duties, we propose to establish a distinct and separate institution for the sole management of all matters affecting the state and relief of the poor. Districts should be appointed of a convenient size, regulated according to circumstances or the extent of population, and for each of these a court or board of management should be nominated to exercise general controlling power, and to attend to numerous auxiliary matters affecting the welfare of the labouring classes generally, which will be hereafter particularised. Whether parishes should be retained as the ground work of local division, or whether new districts should be appointed,

is not a matter of great importance; but it appears preferable to form entirely new districts, both on account of being able to adjust the extent of population to the available superintendence with superior facility, and also in order to cause every inhabitant, no matter what his religious persuasion might be, to feel zealous in the successful prosecution of the plan, from its relating to objects unconnected with controversy or political prepossessions.

This court might be composed jointly of a number of members ex-officio, and of other respectable inhabitants freely elected; thus combining the means of permanent experience and consequent authority, with a fresh infusion of zeal periodically—being in fact a species of institution which is known to work harmoniously in Holland and other places, when no political passion intervenes, and when services are gratuitous. This court would regulate the raising of the rates, frame the local regulations, and act in short as the local legislature for the poor. Its time of meeting would naturally depend upon circumstances, and upon those changes which might occur within the district calling for its superintending control. All appointments should emanate from it; of which the judges are the first to be considered. These might be nominated in the following manner: the names of two candidates to be chosen by the court, and transmitted to the Secretary of State for the Home Department for the time being, who would select one as the person officially appointed. By this regulation

the advantages of suitable qualification and proper discrimination are preserved. The circumstance of there being two candidates, naturally induces those desirous of the office to qualify themselves in a proper manner, so that they may not suffer in comparison with others; and, at the same time, on the part of the minister discrimination must be used in making the choice, as the rejected candidate or his friends would not quiescently permit the appointment to pass unnoticed if superior merit were overlooked.

This officer, being of great importance, should enjoy a liberal salary; his duties in general have been defined; and it is only necessary to repeat that he should have an enlarged acquaintance with the best means of suppressing mendicity, and with commercial economy. He is to be the practical instructor and admonitor of the poor; he should therefore possess not only that general knowledge of the localities of his neighbourhood, but also that information, acquired attainments, and dignity of manners, which must unobtrusively exercise a salutary and moral influence, and guide the jury in cases of difficulty. Upon him would devolve the granting of certificates of character, and all such measures as are calculated to assist the meritorious in removing from one district to another.

Under him should be placed two or more executive officers, according to the extent of the district. It would be the business of these persons to come more immediately in contact with the poor; to enquire into

their condition; to hunt out vagrants; to attend to the removal of paupers from one parish to another; to keep an accurate list of all the inhabitants of the place, specifying their names and occupations; to see what strangers had taken up their residence, and whether they brought certificates of character; to observe the habits of paupers or of persons likely soon to become paupers; to examine how the children of different families were occupied; to attend to the law of settlement, and to correspond with similar officers in other districts in doubtful or suspicious cases; to carry decisions into effect; and, in fine, to act as the medium of intercourse between the indigent applicant and the pauper court, securing in the first instance that the pauper was brought up for judgment, and, in the second, that whatever mode or conditions of relief were awarded, that they should be rigidly fulfilled. It is conceived that a decent class of individuals could be obtained to fill this office under the measure proposed. Having neither to judge nor to punish, they would be relieved from much of the abuse which now attaches to parish officers. They would be neither task masters nor jailors; and they might, therefore, possess elevated feeling and cultivated humanity in forwarding the various details of the plan, commanding the respect of the poor in their immediate neighbourhood. It would be the jury to whom must attach that stern performance of duty, consigning the vagrant to irksome labour or punishment, which draws forth

malevolence from the vitiated mind. But as this would be diffused amongst many, it would give individuals of the jury no concern, and it must soon pass away from the pauper himself when he found complaint unavailing. There would be little chance of the guilty or vicious escaping, and this circumstance would in itself lessen rancorous feelings. Out of a number of persons sitting as jurors, some would naturally know the real character of a pauper attempting to deceive, and thus is obviated the possibility of capricious decision which is occasionally charged against parish overseers, both from want of knowledge and from improper partialities or antipathies. By creating a division of labour, confining all parties to that line of duty for which they were best adapted, the business generally would be simplified, and conducted promptly and satisfactorily.

In respect to the qualifications of jurors, it would be expedient not to permit any person to serve who had himself received charitable relief within a given period. The length of time might be two years or more, according as experience might decide to be most eligible; but it would not be desirable that a person requiring temporary relief, from unforeseen vicissitudes or severe misfortune, should be excluded even considerably before this time had elapsed. The nomination might be effected by different employers, giving lists to the judge, who, with the assistance of the overseers or deputy-superintendants, should strike off those to be summoned; keeping in view the great

object of impressing upon the mind of the pauper, that other persons of his own calling, probably with advantages in respect to work not intrinsically superior to his, were able to appear in an honorable office, in some degree the dispensers and not the solicitors of charity.

In cases of sickness or accident, or unforeseen misfortune, requiring an assuaging delicacy of assistance, in which the applicant could not personally appear, relief should not be given until three of the jury had actually investigated the truth and nature of the application, and had reported to the rest of their fellows. The same steps should be taken when an application was made for allowances for children, and, indeed, in every instance where the whole matter was not directly before the court of investigation, in order to prevent abuses too notorious under the existing system, such as receiving allowances for children that have removed to other places, or long ceased to exist.

In every well regulated parish or district there should be three kinds of institutions: seminaries for the education of the young; infirmaries for the old and the helpless; and workhouses for the labour and discipline of the idle. In all these places discrimination should be observed, and the mode of living should be prescribed by the juries. It is for labouring men to pronounce the description of food, its quality and its quantity, which ought to be given to others of their own class. There would, therefore,

be the same discrimination here as seems established in all other parts of the system. The object is to lessen mendicity in every one of its forms, and to teach forethought and prudence; those, therefore, incapacitated by infirmities incident to humanity, who, having full opportunity, neglected to lay by a provision for old age, should not be so indulgently treated as others whose conduct was uniformly meritorious, but who were reduced to dependence from unavoidable misfortune. The same principle would operate throughout the three institutions, and the simple plan of making juries investigate the degree of previous merit or demerit, and shaping the treatment and allowances accordingly, seems to secure the beneficial operation of necessary charity, at the same time that it has a tendency to decrease the objects by whom assistance is claimed.

To aid and illustrate the execution of the entire measure, it would be desirable for a number of the districts to coalesce, and establish a weekly journal, to be devoted to three objects: first, to publish the names of all paupers claiming succour that appeared within the week; secondly, to give a report of the most interesting and instructive cases brought up for examination, tending to elucidate any important circumstance respecting negligence, improper conduct, improvident marriages, or any elementary principle affecting wages or labour; thirdly, instructive dissertations relative to commerce, manufactures, or wages, exhibiting those branches of employment in

which, according to reasonable presumption, employment was precarious, and also those new openings in which there was a reasonable prospect of success. In addition to these general subjects, biography, statistical information, and anecdotes, interesting or instructive to the working classes generally, might be introduced. A journal of this kind would probably pay its own expenses; and it should be established under the auspices of the district court, which would exercise proper superintendence, and which no doubt would find it expedient to exclude speculative or party politics. These journals, established in different parts, would be found of signal service in all points relating to the prevention and suppression of pauperism, and the executory parts of the measure. The journals of neighbouring districts being filed in each court would greatly facilitate the decision of disputed points relative to the law of settlement: the names of the paupers appearing would present the means of ascertaining the length of time that relief had been granted, not only in one part, but in all; and thus the inducement would no longer exist for a pauper to shift his residence, hoping to screen observation into his true character, by obtaining a settlement amongst strangers. It would not be necessary to publish the names of all the applicants. Many who sought only occasional relief, from severe misfortune, would, no doubt, be hurt to have their names proclaimed and associated with the permanently depraved. The charity which

administers occasional relief to the industrious, but unfortunate, and which, probably, thus prevents meritorious labourers from falling into permanent pauperism, is the most commendable; and in these cases assistance should be given silently and unobtrusively.

The publication of the various circumstances appertaining to the poor within the different districts, could not fail to inspire a new tone of thought, and topic of conversation, throughout all the alehouses and public places where labourers congregated. He who has attended to the effects produced upon the lower branches of the middle order of society, by their attending as jurors at assizes and quarter sessions, where contested points form subjects of discussion, for some time antecedent and subsequent to the day of trial, and where thus is taught a practical knowledge of general equity and fair dealing, making a permanent impression on the mind, will perceive analogically the advantages that must result to the labouring population, by the more homely jurisprudence we design for their participation. To them the affairs of life, relating to wages, labour, and pauperism, are immeasurably more important than abstract questions of civil polity, which, however imposing in appearance, affect only the better classes. And when the real welfare and happiness of the vast majority of the state are thus at issue, shall we spare any trouble or zeal, or incessant application, to raise suitable institutions and machinery, to secure their accomplishment. If the

system of English liberty has been promoted by the practical manner in which the middle orders are called upon to interfere in the execution of the law, so will the industry of the labourers be promoted, by bringing constantly before them cases affecting their own concerns; their thoughts then will be habitually directed to the subject, and they will cease to consider the eulogiums on the civil government of their country as empty sounds, conveying no comfort to the body of the people.

Section III.

Funds.

In respect to the funds required, it should be a fundamental position, that those chiefly interested in the suppression of pauperism should contribute in the largest proportion. There can be no doubt that the causing the wealthy classes to defray the rates directs their attention to the subject, and induces them to originate ameliorative measures, that otherwise might never be contemplated. According to this principle, it does not appear expedient to impose a tax upon moveable property or income; because, in this case, there can be no remedial means resorted to, on the part of contributors, to decrease the tax; and, therefore, the evils may go on augmenting with-

out the operation of any countervailing check. The unequal mode of payment, viewing the wealth, or ability to pay, of different classes, would at first sight seem to be unjust; but it is only the first establishment of the rate that presses unequally. There is a tendency for profits to equalize themselves in every employment; and if in the lapse of time the land, or any description of property, is subjected to an impost, it will be taken into account by the farmer who rents the land; and the real remuneration in this pursuit will be the same as in other branches of industry.

The degree of energy which will be exerted to prevent an excrescent population in agriculture, will, to a very considerable extent, depend upon the length of the leases. When the lease is short, it will be the interest of the proprietors of the soil not to encourage a continued increase of population, eventually to burthen the parish with heavy rates; because, after the lease has expired, their weight must appear considerable to the new occupant of the farm, inducing him to offer a lower rent. But with regard to the mere occupier, by whom the rates are almost exclusively paid and administered, he has a direct interest in the immediate, but little in the ultimate suppression of pauperism. His object is to reap present advantage, and to avoid the direct expenditure of rates, thus leaving the landlord to provide against the future. The possessor of a long lease stands in some degree in the position of the landlord, because a gene-

ration of redundant labourers may grow up within his own time, throwing upon him the rates or burthen of their support. The object is to make both these parties, or the landlord and the occupier, under a long or a short lease, dread an increase of charge; they should, conjointly, exert themselves to keep down the rates, though an increase of wages would naturally attest the success of their endeavours. In all places, therefore, where rates have not been already established, it would be expedient to exact contributions from the proprietors, and the actual occupants of the land, in equal proportions. This secures a careful superintendence, no matter what the tenure may be on which the land is held. Has the occupant a short lease? then, in that case, the rate paid by the proprietor stimulates him to watch the population, and to endeavour to adjust it to the future prospects of the district. Has the occupant a long lease, and does his condition approximate to that of a proprietor? then, he will exercise the superintending vigilance, and not encourage the growth of a redundant peasantry. In Ireland, the establishment of a rate, on this principle, would meet the exigencies which seem chiefly required from the peculiar condition of that country; the landlords and absentees, who are removed from the importunities of beggars, would pay, as in justice they ought to do, a large sum; and the middle men, having also to defray a corresponding sum, would be checked in their disposition to divide

their land into small holdings, in order to realize large immediate profit.

Besides these sources of raising the rates, there would be another most important one, in case the wages of labourers were improved. It is, for two reasons, most desirable to make the labouring classes contribute a quota themselves; first,—to sharpen their faculties and give them a decided inclination to suppress mendicity; secondly,—because it is designed that the persons acting as jurors should receive a small remuneration for their loss of time. This disbursement would be exceedingly trivial when compared with the aggregate sum raised from the labourers; and it seems laudable in principle, by creating emulative feelings and conjoining emolument with honor. Throughout the United Kingdom there are upwards of four millions of persons receiving wages: now, if we imagine each to contribute so small a sum as three pence per week, that is not more than would defray the cost of one glass of gin, we have the prodigious sum annually of two millions six hundred thousand pounds. It is easy to perceive, from this immense receipt, whenever the contributors are great in number, that if it be possible to raise the labourers generally to a comfortable condition, there hardly can be deficiency of funds, not only for the support of paupers, but for many other points connected with the economical condition of the working classes. The collection of this rate could be managed by em-

ployers making a suitable deduction in paying wages, and accounting to the regular collectors, who would be aware of the number of workmen employed; and in the first instance an outline of the entire measure, judiciously compiled, might be given to the labourers to secure their zealous co-operation.

It is proper to remind those who are disposed to consider a poor-fund as possessing a constant tendency to increase, that whenever a stagnation of commerce ensued, depressing the wages of labour to a low limit, the allowance given to the pauper would equally decrease. The labourers fix that allowance, and they would gradually strike off little superfluities one after the other, until the unproductive consumption was reduced to an exceedingly low ebb, thus permitting the national accumulation of income beyond expenditure to proceed at a high rate, until commerce resumed its customary vigour and elasticity.

The entire amount levied in England and Wales for poor rates, in the year ending the 25th March, 1831, according to the most recent official return, was £8,279,217: of this, so large a sum as £1,540,198 was expended for other purposes than the relief of the poor; being chiefly parish entertainments, and legal expenses caused by removals, disagreements concerning the law of settlement, and numberless such matters, resulting from the present cumbersome, contradictory, and unsatisfactory state of the law. Under the system proposed, a large sum might remain for

unavoidable expenses, allowing five hundred thousand pounds to be saved by the abridgment of legal disbursements and useless entertainments; and this amount could be distributed in salaries and remuneration to the various officers and parties interested. The net sum, practically devoted to the support of the poor, would thus remain undiminished under the existing rates, while it received a powerful accession from the contributions of the labourers themselves; and while also the number of applicants for its bounty would be lessened.

Section IV.

Description of Work to be performed by Paupers.

To provide a proper description of work is a most important consideration in all charitable institutions. It is of vital importance that paupers be always actively employed, both that they may seek relief from restraint as speedily as possible, and lessen the burthen of their maintenance; and that when they return to labour for themselves, their faculties may not have been vitiated by habitual idleness. Means, if possible, should be adopted to shape out new em-

ployment not interfering with established branches of industry. When paupers are engaged in the same species of handicraft as artisans earning their own subsistence, they tend to injure the latter by bringing their extra production into the market and overstocking it beyond the customary demand. That description of labour, useful in itself, but which in an ordinary state of things would not be called into existence, is clearly the most eligible. There are two distinct resources of this nature, and they seem to present a field not easily exhausted.

In many maritime districts means present themselves for extensive embankments from the sea; and it would be expedient to allow a number of the district courts to coalesce, for the purpose of unity of action, in carrying such works into effect upon a large and comprehensive scale. A considerable extent of beneficial labour could be disposed of in this manner, and in other parts the common resource of making roads, and the formation of public works, seems to offer the most extended means of employment: footpaths also might be formed throughout every agricultural village; nuisances removed; and a thousand useful undertakings accomplished, which in many parts of the kingdom, not celebrated in story for cleanliness or tidiness of arrangement, would present an augean task, upon which the efforts of several generations could be usefully spent.

But, independently of this description of labour, it is possible to devise another mode of employment

for paupers, which would be attended with still more efficacious effects. Let the fruits of their labour directly administer to the comforts or advantage of the jurors, and others of their fellows, who by means of industry, frugality, and prudence, have maintained their independence. A variety of passions are thus brought into play, greatly strengthening the general measure of reformation. In an agricultural village, suppose a treadmill erected for the grinding of corn, to be worked by disorderly and vicious paupers, and appropriated solely to the use of jurors and others of their class, giving them the advantage of its grindings; and it is obvious that we subjoin to the irksomeness of work on the part of the vagrant, galling feelings of envy, which touch to the quick, and stimulate him to escape from his humiliating position. Many similar applications could be resorted to, and it does not matter much whether the work so produced is attained by the smallest portion of human effort. It is directed solely to increase the comforts of those in actual employment, which would not otherwise be sought. In a workhouse there must always be some waste of labour, contrasted with private economy; and the object is to direct its application to that channel, where, in place of being injurious, it may at once perform some service, and operate to redress existing evils. We have a number of benefits or little gratifications in store for the labouring population, all of which will require the assistance of work to stretch them to their highest limits; and this ser-

vice can be performed by the paupers, under the vigilant direction of their own fellows. To make, in short, the paupers in some degree the servants of labourers of their own class, who are above them, not in rank, but in character, is the chief basis of the plan, in respect to work; and it is difficult to conceive that, if once fairly carried into effect, it will not ultimately check mendicity.

We think, therefore, on closing this branch of the subject, that if love for our own design has not inspired too sanguine an anticipation of its future achievements, all the advantages resulting from well regulated charity are attained, while the evils incident to and inseparable from the English poor laws are avoided. The importunities of beggars, and all the disgusting appearance which must be presented in every country where charity is left to the precarious support of private benevolence, where mendicants, in crowds, covered with vermin, gather around the stranger, some abjectly soliciting, others doggedly demanding alms, could have no existence. On the other hand, no virtuous feeling is checked, no tie of family affection severed, no sentiment of manly independence destroyed; on the contrary, they are powerfully strengthened; prudence, forethought, and frugality, are in continuous requisition, both in thought and in action; and if we run over that dark catalogue of immorality and vice, which are said to be engendered by the English poor laws, it will be found, that means have been taken to avert them all.

If this conclusion be sound, we are justified in pronouncing that prudential restraint will then be established, assimilating the labourers to the middle classes of society; they will learn the advantage of keeping their numbers adjusted to the demand for their services; and when this point is fairly attained, we have surmounted one of the chief difficulties, in regard to our views of future civilization, order, and happiness.

To every diversity of occupation, whether town mechanics or agricultural labourers, the plan seems equally adapted. A slight modification in detail is required, according to the class; but the predominant principle remains unchanged, and it is difficult to say which party would derive the superior advantage. The weaver would be cured of his political dissatisfaction, the agriculturist of his hatred to our social system and his disposition to incendiary violence. To all parts of the empire also, and to every state of habitual wages, the plan is equally suited; to the turbulent peasant of Tipperary, as well as to the smooth artisan of London, so soon as we prepare the way for its favourable introduction.

CHAPTER VIII.

MEANS OF ENABLING THE LABOURERS TO SHAPE OUT WORK FOR THEMSELVES WITHOUT DETRIMENT TO OTHERS.

SECTION I.—*Advantages of the Division of Capital and Labour.*

ON referring to the condition of any country, it is generally found that its civilization, and the degree of its advancement, are proportioned to the division of employment and consequent distinction of ranks which have been established. In mere agricultural states, or in those which have little foreign commerce, the only gradations are the landlord and the peasantry; an intermediate class, the farmers, subsequently appears; but as all these cultivators are confined to the same pursuit, the incentives to exertion, and also to the discovery of the conveniences and embellishments of life which dignify the human character, are unknown. It seems, therefore, singular that an attempt should be made in modern times to revert, in many particulars, to this primitive state,

and to cast a censure upon that organization of society which separates the capitalist, who supplies the materials and implements of labour, from the operative, who performs a prescribed task for definite wages. The division of labour and the accumulation of capital are inseparable; and in their most perfect developement they act reciprocally upon each other. To establish a system of interchange, as is occasionally coveted, without the intervention of capitalists, would be to plunge society into its first stages of incipient civilization, and to create a system of rude barter for the ordinary commodities of life, without that expanding desire for new conveniencies which forms the characteristic feature of high refinement. The employment of capital is an unerring criterion of improvement; it tends to assist the proper developement of a nation's capabilities, both by augmenting the production of goods, and by saving time and expense in their distribution. In regard to production, many articles could never be brought into general use without the employment of large capital, and the concentration of diversified means for the attainment of a definite end. Considerable funds are required to store up the raw material; and without those vast buildings and admirable machines, which constitute the glory of the manufacturing districts of England, we never should possess that extensive export, which enables us to pay for the wines, tea, coffee, and sugar, which are required for consumption; not to speak of the innumerable articles of domestic and

intellectual luxury which are defrayed out of the surplus product that skill and capital are enabled to realize.

In regard to distribution, the establishment of warehouses and retail shops tends to save and economize the time of the purchaser; it is the means of enabling every person to pursue that calling for which he is best adapted; and this constitutes one of the most material advantages of the division of labour. Were a working man to take the produce of his labour to market himself, his time would be uselessly consumed, and he would acquire desultory and loitering habits. By concentrating his attention to one thing, work is not only better done but is done more quickly; and the economizing of time is an important consideration both as regards commerce and the moral concerns of life. Independently of these advantages respecting the employment of capital, and the division of labour, the adaptation of science to the principal arts necessarily extends as the distinctions in society, and the rewards given for eminent services, ascend to an elevated scale. A powerful influence results from the spreading of knowledge; means are afforded for each branch to perfect itself in its respective art; and this must be accomplished more satisfactorily when a distinction of rewards appears, and when all are striving to overtake and to pass rival competitors struggling in the same career. There would be no stimulus to future discoveries

were a system of equality to prevail; every person would be content with his share of the general production, and would be little disposed to incessant exertion, or to pass those sleepless nights of anxious thought which now characterize the candidate for fame.

Exclusive of these cogent considerations, it is obvious, from principles already developed, that it is important for every country to contain as few labourers, and as many of the higher classes, as possible. The desideratum is not to lessen the number of the former, but to elevate them to the condition of the latter. When the majority of the people are removed from immediate want, there is always a general resource presented against distress; they have superior means to lower their mode of living, and to practise frugality; and from the accumulations thus realized, contrasted with habitual expenditure, they soon resume their accustomed prosperity. But in a country where all, or nearly all, are labourers, there is no resource against adversity; there is no lower deep into which the body of the people can fall; and unforeseen stagnation and extreme ruin go hand in hand, from the absence of every resource or material which could be resorted to, to operate a beneficial change.

In respect also to the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge, the advantages are no less signal than in what appertains to the ordinary affairs of commerce.

There must be infinitely superior hopes of valuable discoveries, when a number of educated minds are labouring in the same common cause; and the division of capital tends in a striking degree to awaken and to promote this kind of education.

Perceiving thus the channels in which amendment in industrial organization should work, its practical attainment is facilitated. At present probably there are a hundred labourers for one master manufacturer: could we lessen this vast disparity it must be eminently beneficial; or could we by any means create a consumption amongst the labourers themselves, which would tend to better their condition, and render them, in the opportunity of obtaining work, comparatively independent, it must diminish the general poverty. For the last thirty years many plans have been promulgated for this end; but almost all of them being framed by persons either imperfectly acquainted with enlarged principles of commerce, or so full of one idea that they viewed the subject through a deceitful medium, they have fallen into merited oblivion. Periodically a revival starts up under a new shape; but still, however attractive or amusing to the public in general, commanding little attention from philosophical enquirers. At present, under the auspices of Mr. Owen, a rude system of exchange amongst operatives, in order to supersede wholesale and retail venders, seems most in vogue; and public exchanges, labour notes, and valuators, are establishing for the

due achievement of this object. We shall endeavour to discriminate, and to point out under what principle, and how far, these institutions may be carried without militating against any of the conclusions set forth in this section.

Section II.

Of widening the Channels of ordinary Employment.

The expenditure of the labourer consists of articles of a two-fold description, of which, much the larger part is produced and disposed of by capitalists; and in this part immediate labour, as a primary element of cost, enters but in a small degree in determining the price. It is thus obvious that those articles are produced more advantageously and on cheaper terms by this arrangement, than they could be under any other economical system. So long as it is desired permanently to better the condition of the labourer, and not to be content with immediate accommodation, it would be most indiscreet to supersede the existing mode of production, and to cause the labourer directly to manufacture the articles he requires. It is evident that if a labourer have to take land himself, even assuming that he had the option, he could not raise

corn so easily, so promptly, or so cheaply, as is accomplished by the instrumentality of a scientific farmer, who employs the most improved implements of husbandry and process of cultivation; nor could a weaver hope to produce his coat so readily, or at so small an outlay, as an extensive manufacturer, who employs the most complete machinery in the fabric, and an extensive knowledge of chemical science in the dying and finishing of the article. It would, consequently, be a misdirection of means for the labourer to resort to that description of production which can be accomplished in so superior a manner by the present division of labour. It would reduce the aggregate commodities produced, probably, more than one half; and, therefore, the nation, in a collective sense, would be so much the poorer; entailing ulterior misery on the labourer himself.

The kind of additional articles which, in their fabrication, should give employment to those at present idle, or fill up the unoccupied time of active labourers, and increase their earnings, must not interfere with or supersede any established business. New articles of consumption must be created, and those should be selected which can be best fabricated by single operatives, without the assistance or intervention of capitalists. Low as are the artificial wants of the labouring classes, that is, low compared to the ultimate standard designed for them, a large field presents itself for this branch of industry. The whole, or by far the greater part of furniture adapted for labourers,

houses, may be made amongst themselves; all the tables and chairs, the beds, and various articles of convenience, might be immeasureably increased, and might be manufactured without in the least interfering with any established employment. In addition to this branch, what an immense range presents itself in administering to conveniences and embellishments, in the articles of dress for the labourers' wives and daughters. The first cost of the material used is a mere trifle; the chief value consists in the sewing, shaping, and other parts of manipulative skill, which might be performed in the labourer's family, giving great auxiliary means to assist the earnings of the labourer himself. Were a taste for these little articles of personal decoration to become general amongst the great body of the working orders, a vast resource would be presented within themselves, uninfluenced and uncontrollable by vicissitudes incident to foreign commerce.

Besides this great branch of consumption, it is probable that the middle and higher classes of society would throw into the hands of the labourers some of the description of employment described. A young lady might be quite as usefully, and certainly much more agreeably employed in other pursuits, than in fashioning inner integuments of dress, or attending to the reparation of injured hose; and were every means used to throw such employments to the female branches of the labourer's family, it might serve as a foundation for the new and auxiliary earnings to com-

mence upon, until a general elevation of expenditure had been accomplished. At present, if the expenditure of a labouring family be divided into a hundred parts, not ten, properly speaking, belong to artificial wants. So large a portion as ninety is absorbed in providing for mere subsistence and immediate necessaries. Could the proportion of ten parts be increased relatively to fifty, a vast change would obviously be effected; the labourers would then be dependent on capitalists for only half of their habitual earnings, at the same time that the business of the latter sustained no diminution. In this ameliorated state of things, it would hardly be possible to suffer severe distress, or to be deeply injured by an accidental stagnation of commerce. The labourers would be dependent on one another for a large portion of their expenditure, and consequently for a corresponding portion of reciprocal employment. Under the existing state of industry, if any stagnation of commerce ensue, they have no resource, because they are driven from the only employment open to them, quite uncontrollable by themselves; and large bodies of them are unavoidably reduced to pauperism. Let us suppose, for illustration, that the aggregate amount of wages is forty millions annually, and suppose the labourers, or rather their families, make new articles for themselves to the amount of forty millions in addition, augmenting and not interfering with any other branch of trade, there would then be a clear accession of wealth, and by means of it the labouring class would be rendered

relatively independent. Suppose now, from stagnation of commerce, a number of labourers receiving wages to the extent of ten millions to be disbanded, it is obvious that under the present state of things the consequences would be most deplorable. So great a proportion as one fourth deprived of their work must occasion a prodigious falling off in the consumption of articles supplied by capitalists; and these, stripped of their ordinary business, would be impelled to dismiss more of their workmen, widening the circle of distress, and inflicting permanent injury upon the community at large. But were so desirable a change effected as to double the expenditure of the labourer, the part vended by the capitalist to remain unchanged, the other half to be produced directly by the labourers' own class, little injury could ensue from the cessation of business to the extent of ten millions. The labouring order, in a collective sense, would lose only a comparatively small proportion of their general employment; all those permanently engaged at fixed wages, would continue to consume those articles made exclusively amongst the labourers themselves; and thus a great resource would be preserved, preventing the dismissed workmen from falling to utter destitution. The same means would then exist amongst the labourers for correcting temporary depression, and bringing things to a proper level, and to the accustomed state of prosperity, as is now witnessed amongst the better classes. Greater frugality would be practised, that is to say, a greater accumulation of wealth,

in some of its forms, would take place, to repair the breach caused by the derangement or stagnation of foreign commerce. Indeed, under the state of society designed, commercial vicissitudes could seldom occur; gluts from domestic causes would be nearly at an end; and the disposition of manufacturers to dismiss workmen from badness of trade, could only result from war, great revolutions in foreign states which were closely allied to this country, or some such rare and accidental calamities. Even these would be of exceedingly temporary duration. So long as the mass of the people possessed a resource within themselves, preventing an immediate fall to pauperism, the loss of employment, in a few particular trades, could not inflict much general injury. The convulsion would be gradual and partial, and timely warning would be given, by the disposition evinced by master manufacturers to reduce wages. The first attempt at this procedure would place the workmen in that particular branch of business on a less advantageous footing than their neighbours; and from the new resource presented, uncontrolled by extraneous circumstances, they would be disposed, if not to leave the employment where trade was dull, at least not to court it, but to prosecute their other branch of earnings with greater assiduity. And this circumstance, of diminished energy in production ensuing in the trade in which business was dull, and consequently tending to adjust the supply of goods manufactured to the diminished demand, would soon restore prices. At

present, in the cotton, the woollen, or the silk trades, if wages are reduced, the workman has no redeeming alternative; he must either work for lower wages, thereby increasing the quantity of goods, or he must fall upon the parish. Had he a resource independent of these several manufactures, it is evident that some time must elapse before he would be entirely destitute. Means would be presented for the exercise of frugality, without unproductively consuming the funds of others in charitable allowances; there would be a positive withdrawal from the business in which wages were reduced; and thus, from the preservation of the home trade amongst the labourers themselves during the temporary dulness, things must gradually rectify themselves, and be restored to prosperity.

It will be observed, that, though the chief value of these new articles designed for the consumption of the labourers, and elevating their artificial wants, would be derived from workmanship, yet still the value of the material would be of some moment, and would extend the general business of the manufacturers, and of the community at large. If a piece of cotton, for example, worth five shillings, on being fashioned into an article of dress, is doubled or trebled in its value, by means of the work bestowed upon it, it is apparent that two objects are attained: general commerce is extended, and the work being confined to the labouring class, opens a resource which will be in constant operation, so soon as the artificial wants are permanently elevated, and the

consumption of such articles has become habitual and necessary.

The advantage of throwing this employment into the hands of the female branch of the labourer's family appears very considerable. It enables a fund to be raised, previous to marriage, by both parties; and tends, in a very considerable degree, to elevate the character of the labourer's daughter, by placing before her the means of maintaining constantly a reputable appearance; a species of laudable pride, which is a never failing attendant upon, if not an incentive to, personal propriety and good conduct.

Having described the principle, the next object is to detail the plan by which it may be carried into effect, assuming that the existing poverty and distress amongst the body of the labourers is first removed. From every inquiry and means of judging that are presented, in respect to the habits of the labouring classes, it appears that the want of a market, or place where articles required by the labourers can uniformly be found, is the chief desideratum. Having explained the extent to which the labourer can shape out work for himself without the assistance of a capitalist, there is little difficulty in pointing out the use that may be made of those labour exchanges, or bazaars now in vogue, without militating against the interests of other parties. It seems expedient to establish in those districts chiefly inhabited by the working classes, a large bazaar, to be devoted to the sale of articles fabricated by the

labourers and their families. The object is to bring into existence an additional quantity of commodities, and to expose and congregate those articles in such a manner, consulting display and convenience, that every person will at once be tempted to consume, and, consequently, sedulous to produce. There is little doubt that the lower orders are desirous to consume as well as other descriptions of people; and if we shew them that production is within their reach, enabling them to compass additional gratification with a little exertion, new wants will arise, possessing an inherent principle of growth, which must extend, and gradually elevate the scale of their living. It would be desirable to have those bazaars built on an extensive scale. They might be divided into two stories: on the lower floor would be stalls for tables, chairs, household implements of every description, and all such articles as can be as advantageously made by a single man as by the intervention of capitalists: in the upper floor would be stalls for gowns, shirts, bonnets, stockings, made up dresses, and every species of sempstress' work in general. It would be proper to have those buildings, in the first instance, erected by subscription, or public funds, in order that the rents might be trifling, and that every article might be sold as cheaply as possible.

In some parts of the country, places analogous, in a partial degree, to what is here described, particularly for the sale of furniture, exist; and the state of society in those parts will exemplify the advantages resulting

from the design proposed. In those places, the use of articles in the labourers' houses is greater than where no such marts are established; whether the demand for the article occasions the erection of the mart, or the erection of the mart induces the consumption of the article, it would be difficult to decide. The two act and react on each other. The establishment of a new site for the sale of articles administering to long confirmed wants or habits, can be of little service; but in regard to the creation of a new want or habit, it is of primary importance to keep the incentive, or temptation, constantly and conspicuously in view. Many commodities sold in the Soho bazaar, being in constant use, might as well be disposed of in regular shops; but it cannot for a moment be doubted, that collecting a number of articles, fanciful in their nature, and of attractive display, has occasioned great sale, which never would have ensued, had such establishments not existed. On the whole, therefore, notwithstanding the complaints of shopkeepers, these extensive bazaars may add to the general business, giving employment to great numbers of people, and not injuring any one class, so long as they are confined to suitable objects. In regard to the more humble bazaars contemplated, it is obvious no objections could apply, confining them to the strict end proposed, and not embracing that indefinite series of objects, which has so long supported the credulity of many sanguine projectors. They are designed to call into existence a completely new

class of articles; to establish a mutual connexion and dependence amongst the labourers themselves; to accomplish benefit, quite as much by the temptation of new expenditure as by the mere employment derived in production; and to shew them the great resources they have at command, by means of well directed and continuous industry, of which they can never be deprived. In making the commencement, in addition to the support given by the middle and better classes of society, in having certain descriptions of sempstress' work performed at these institutions, which, it is reasonable to expect, will be zealously afforded, it might be a matter for consideration, whether or not labourers permanently employed, at fixed wages, might not, through means taken by their employers in paying them, be induced to spend a certain portion of their earnings weekly in purchasing articles of real convenience. This would give an extensive foundation, which is the chief difficulty; and there are many means of managing it, without the smallest approach to the truck system in the north, which occasioned such just reprehension. Were the plan practically to work, in periods of stagnation, a considerable accumulation of goods would take place in the bazaar; and when an habitual sale was established, persons, whose business it was to attend in the bazaar, would be induced to lay in a stock, thus giving a vent to the producer, and obviating any serious difficulty or distress. The accumulation must, of course, cause a depreciation in value, as

no artificial bolstering up of prices is contemplated; every thing sold in the bazaar mainly consists of articles of which the chief element of value is the fashioning and manipulative skill. As this trade, therefore, would be pretty uniform, it is not unreasonable to assume, that venders, at all times, would be anxious to purchase, whenever an offer was made, under the regular terms. The articles not requiring in their fabrication any material capital, or division of labour greater than what the family of the workman could themselves carry into effect, would, in point of fact, be disposed of on cheaper terms than in any other quarter. The erection of the building is the only assistance required; and if any article disposed of in the bazaar can be produced on cheaper terms elsewhere, there is no reason why the channels of trade should be diverted from their natural course by artificial means. There seems, therefore, no occasion to alter the medium of exchange; to displace money, or to resort to labour notes, or tickets, which may figure for a time in circulation, but which, on the first blush of improvement, will assuredly disappear.

It may be assumed as a maxim, that, in designing plans for the amelioration of society, the less we resort to expedients characterizing the first stages of civilization, when trade is performed by barter, and the more we keep in view the usages which experience has proved to be best calculated for all the purposes of commerce, the greater is the chance that our plans will be permanently successful. The

intervention of money is found the simplest and most satisfactory mode of accomplishing all commercial exchanges; and unless our new institutions can support themselves according to the great principle, that the interest of all parties is consulted by fair and open competition, it is not probable that they will permanently survive. One great advantage we do expect to obtain: the cordial, unbought, unsolicited good will of the labourers themselves towards these new marts. They naturally must be disposed to encourage what a very little reflection must teach them is in principle greatly designed for their benefit; and this good will being, it is conceived, quite sufficient in itself for our purpose, the venders at the bazaars may allow various shops to arise in competition, feeling little anxiety in regard to their probability of success.

The anticipation of the advantages resulting from the augmentation of consumption of articles, fabricated in the manner described, proceeds from ascertained results of a few labouring families, in the metropolis, earning more than three shillings per week, by making a very few homely articles; and it was considered by the parties themselves, that, had a proper market been established, these earnings could have been doubled.

Section III.

Of enabling ingenious Operatives to become Master Manufacturers.

When we refer to the history of inventions relating to the practical arts, we are struck by the large number which have been discovered by the humbler classes in life. It is natural to suppose, that those who are constantly using tools and machines, must have a better knowledge of their capabilities, and various relations in respect to the ends to which they may be directed, than mere consumers, quite ignorant of the manner in which the most important commodities are produced. Here consists the chief hopes of the beneficial consequences resulting from the diffusion of knowledge. When the operatives are well acquainted with the elementary principles, upon which labour in all its forms depends, it is natural to suppose that many discoveries will be made, in their aggregate effects greatly surpassing those, which, in the last generation, have conferred such signal benefit upon mankind. The master manufacturers, far from feeling pangs of envy at the prospect of losing their relative situation by the advance of those whom they are accustomed to regard as beneath them, and designed only as the passive instruments of manual labour,

should rejoice at their advancement, and should be stimulated to cultivate their faculties, in order to preserve a superiority, not by checking the aspiring efforts of their dependants, but by seeking a higher standard of mental accomplishments themselves. Every means, therefore, should be taken to encourage workmen to make discoveries in the practical arts, and to secure to them all the benefits resulting from their ingenuity. It has been more than once observed, that in many of our leading manufactures, workmen are possessed of knowledge calculated to improve and to simplify many machines now in operation; but they suppress this knowledge, apprehensive that it might diminish the employment of manual labour, and also that they might not enjoy the fruits of their own discoveries.

This notion could be corrected by adopting a new measure in respect to patents; and this important undertaking seems to belong to the district court, or board of local management, formerly described as the legislature of the labouring classes. An office should be established, securing to the humblest inventor the benefit of his discovery; and it might be arranged, that an operative conscious of possessing information, or the means of bringing a new application of science to bear upon some manufacture, should apply to the chairman for the time being, of the board, entrust him with the nature of the secret, and be guided by his decision and advice in respect to the means of making it practically avail-

able. The object is, to remove from the operative the whole of that difficulty in respect to the title and specification of patents, which now form so great a barrier to those unacquainted with the technicalities of law, and which, consequently, occasion incessant litigation. The district court or board might attend to these matters; and, as they are constituted in some degree the guardians of the working classes, a little arrangement would make the task comparatively easy to them, whilst the operative would be relieved from insuperable difficulties. It would be expedient to reduce, if not to abolish, the present stamp duties, which seem inexpedient on many grounds, as being a tax, in the most objectionable form, upon knowledge and industry. If it were found, on experience, that the reduction of expense multiplied the number of patents to an inconvenient or injurious extent, it would be easy to throw the outlay into another channel, assisting and not militating against any valuable invention. Indeed, to remodel entirely the existing law relative to patents seems desirable on many grounds: the inventor should be relieved from the tediousness of the process, which frequently gives rise to more discouraging evils than loss of time; he should be allowed to choose, seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years, for the exclusive use of his discovery, paying, in the first instance, a smaller cost; and local arrangements should be made to facilitate the means of his converting it to immediate advantage, by the payment of a definite sum of money.

It was formerly stated, that a small portion of the

contributions made by the body of the labourers, as poor rates, might be usefully appropriated to other purposes than the immediate support of the poor. It would be desirable for the local board to possess this option of appropriation; and an excellent opportunity presents itself for commendable disbursement in assisting the ingenious operative in discoveries, which extend commerce as much as they benefit himself. It is designed, that the local board should possess not only the means to discriminate, but the power to reward; they act emphatically as the poor man's friend; and a strong stimulus to exertion must be diffused amongst the superior class of operatives, when they were conscious that they had only to detail their plans to the chairman of the board, in order to receive immediate attention, and also assistance, in case their conduct was meritorious. The collective body of the labourers would not object to this appropriation of a trivial part of their contributions; they would consider it designed to defray laudable prizes in a moral conflict, from which chance was excluded. Besides it does not necessarily follow, that a positive gratuity would be given. Assistance on credit could be afforded, taking as security the right to the discovery for which the patent was procured, or any other guarantee that seemed available.

A regulation of this kind in manufacturing districts must create an extraordinary sensation amongst the operatives at large. How many are the cases where valuable discoveries die with the possessor, and are entirely lost to the public, for want of a small sum of

money, or credit, to bring the invention to full maturity. How frequently is a long life wasted amidst anxiety and trouble, and only kept ardent in the pursuit of knowledge by the anticipated prospect of final success; and probably, in the eleventh hour, just on the eve of achievement, the invention has to be parted with to some rich individual, who steps in and deprives the humble and exhausted discoverer of the fruits of his hard earned exertions. An arrangement similar to that proposed, would obviate evils of this kind; and, were society in that prosperous state which our sanguine views ultimately design, probably every month would announce some ingenious invention, either entirely novel in itself, or exhibiting the application to new purposes of principles already known. By these means will be augmented the embellishments, the gratifications, and conveniencies, of life, keeping pace with the new discoveries which are progressively appearing in the theoretical parts of science.

There might be some charge of partiality if these resources and rewards were confined to the town mechanics, whilst the agricultural labourers enjoyed no corresponding advantages. There is no substantial reason why the most meritorious amongst this great class should not be animated in their avocations by the same incentives and hopes as are designed for their compeers in manufacturing industry. The district court, or local board, could still perform the same serviceable part to the industrious agriculturist, though the range in which assistance is required is more limited. Rewards should be bestowed for va-

luable suggestions in husbandry, in the rearing of cattle, improved views in respect to the rotation of crops, or improvements in agricultural implements; and, it is conceived, out of the proportion of the labourers' contributions placed at the disposal of the board, an adequate fund would be presented for purposes of this kind. It is reasonable to anticipate, that the great proprietors and landlords in general would be disposed to elevate the condition of their dependents; they would therefore strike in with the arrangements proposed, and would use assiduous zeal in acquainting the agricultural population with the benefits which were within their reach to obtain. If a system were established, occasionally giving a farm to the most meritorious, skilful, and well instructed husbandmen, within a given district, the local board, out of the fund at their disposal, supplying requisite capital on credit, in order to have the cultivation conducted in a scientific manner, the beneficial effects would be manifold and extensive. We are not, in judging of the extent of advantages, to direct exclusive attention to him who wins the race. How many candidates will start, buoyant from hope, or a confidence in their own powers, who, though unsuccessful in their immediate efforts, will have their pace quickened by the competition, giving a new tone to the collective character of our peasantry. This diffusive amelioration seems inseparable from the occasional elevation of a deserving individual to a new sphere; and, judging from the smallness of the means requisite to attain the end, there seems neither difficulty in ob-

taining the cooperation of the working classes themselves, nor serious obstacles in respect to the mode of assisting them when suitable exertion is displayed.

Section IV.

Of widening the Channels of skilful Employment generally.

To multiply employments which can be performed as well by single individuals as by the combination of many, lessens injurious competition, and increases the rate of wages generally. It is now our business to illustrate the effects which will result from more extended occupations in the higher departments of skilful labour. Amongst all receiving wages there is a certain relation, which causes benefit obtained by one class to be disseminated, and to diffuse a genial assistance to all who are dependant on stated services. Let us suppose, for example, that a taste for the fine arts were generally extended, so that every house, down to the extreme limits of the middle orders, or even still lower, exhibited portraits of its different members, or other corresponding embellishments, an immense step would be gained in civilization. Morality itself, and the finer feelings of the heart would be promoted, by keeping, as it were, the distant constantly present in the thoughts; or snatching from the oblivion of death the revered

lineaments of some relative, whose example in life strengthened the disposition to virtue. Many a nobleman has been incited to distinguished actions by casting his looks around the hall of his paternal mansion, when in a susceptible or felicitous temper of mind; and shall we deny humbler individuals corresponding remembrancers,—silent, yet emphatic in their useful warnings. But we must not dilate, however agreeable the theme; our immediate concern is with commerce; and in the future progress of society it cannot, for a moment, be doubted that an immense opening presents itself for employment of the nature described. England is still greatly in arrear in all branches appertaining to the fine arts; they seem exotics nurtured with care by the affluent, but they have hardly yet commenced to diffuse themselves amongst the body of the people; and when it is known that their advantages are great in a commercial point of view, as well as if considered merely elegant superfluities to refine the manners, a new feeling will prevail; and, in time, England may boast of her houses exhibiting as splendid embellishments, in respect to architecture, sculpture, and painting, and all branches of decoration, as she now possesses with regard to her carpets and the grosser articles of furniture. Supposing the taste to arise in all parts equal to what prevails in Italy, and that every town exhibited its public institution—that, in short, the fine arts were not forced into consideration by means of fashion, but that the

feeling was deeply imbibed, and identified with the national habits, it is probable that the difficulties and distress which prevail amongst a large class of the community, just at that boundary where accumulated capital ends, and dependence on wages, or personal earnings, begins, would rapidly pass away. In Italy, the production of these articles forms the one-thirtieth of the entire production; in England, not the one five-hundredth part: it is thus easy to perceive, that an extensive resource is presented in this channel of industry, and few will dispute the expediency of encouraging it, exhibiting as it does the characteristic of high civilization.

This question, in a commercial sense, does not merely concern the middle classes, or those persons who, in receiving the wages of labour, expect a remuneration for intellectual endowments. In giving encouragement to a class of people who produce, not only real wealth, but a high description of it, there is a clear gain to the community, or in other words, of those articles which minister to the enjoyments and gratifications of life. The classes engaged in this description of production remove from other branches of industry, which tends to effect an opening for others. If a number of persons succeed in this employment, it lessens the supply of clerks, and other persons depending upon the superior description of wages; a demand being created for these, gives in return an opening for warehousemen and others a step lower in the scale; these again present an opening

to others a step below them; and thus, progressively, the means of employment are widened for the whole labouring class, which must operate in a striking degree to improve their condition.

For the establishment of this beneficial extension of employment, it seems only necessary to create, in every town, a large institution for the encouragement of the fine arts. Let the cost be jointly defrayed by the town and the government; the town, in the first instance, raising as large a sum as the inhabitants are disposed to subscribe, and the government paying an equivalent sum; and thus there will be a strong inducement for a liberal subscription being raised, in order that a large amount may be obtained gratuitously from the state. Why should we not behold in this country, as in other parts, a number of cities emulous in patronizing the arts, and running an honourable race in the encouragement of rising genius? Are the intelligence, the wealth, and public spirit of Dublin, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Glasgow, Manchester, or Birmingham, less than those of Florence, Genoa, Milan, or Venice? And what a difference would be presented, and how many thousand enterprising and ingenious individuals would be raised from comparative obscurity to eminence, were the same elevated resources presented in the English as in the Italian cities. It is reasonable to suppose, that a vigorous appeal, properly timed, would be attended with happy consequences in procuring support; but in the mean time, the corporations of the

leading towns would be called upon to assist the general design. They have an ample field for the encouragement of merit. Eminent characters, who have conferred a signal benefit on their town, might have their fame perpetuated by an appropriate statue, bust, or memento; the town halls, also, might be ornamented with paintings, illustrative of historical incidents, interesting to the immediate neighbourhood.

In another department, there are means equally extensive for patronage. The churches and places of religious worship present a fair opportunity for ornamental expenditure; and, as a general principle, it would be found, that the very examination and criticism of these works of art would inspire, amongst private individuals, a new taste, and a desire to introduce the production of some branches of these arts into their own houses. It is a well known circumstance, that in remote parts the erection of a handsome and tasteful building has improved an entire neighbourhood, merely from the influence of example, and the operation of a new taste, and has even caused some persons to pull down their houses rather than be shamed by the contrast which they presented to the new erection. Cases have occurred where a small school house, built by subscription in a neat manner, has induced the neighbouring population to imitate it; and every subsequent cottage has assumed a more improved appearance, which probably never would have ensued, had no example been presented to

exercise village criticism. This feeling of emulative taste in a thriving community is universal; and we merely seek to seize upon it, and make it work on an extended scale, in forwarding those designs which promote the benefit of persons dependant upon their individual earnings.

It is apparent that there is no paucity of means for unlimited employment, in case exertions are judicious; and, succeeding in these, in the future stages of society, the number of labourers seeking work must be gradually lessened. We have shown, in the first instance, the manner in which the supply of labourers can be restrained to the habitual demand, or adjusted to the same relative proportions as exist in the better classes of society; and, in the present chapter, we have endeavoured to point out the means by which employment may be progressively enlarged: the joint operation of the two, it is fairly presumable, cannot fail to check future indigence. Suppose the supply of labourers at any given period adjusted to the demand, and that in any particular occupation ten labourers were employed: if, by the institutions described in this chapter, only one out of the ten can be removed, so that nine remain to perform the work allotted before to ten, it is obvious that wages will be raised, and a great improvement effected in the condition of the labouring classes. This auspicious ascent has a tendency to increase, when once the commencement is fairly made. The greater the demand for labour, the greater will be the consumption of commo-

dities; and, conjoined to this increase of consumption, must there be again, in turn, a greater range of employment presented to workmen, enabling them to advance another step in their social state. It will be observed, that it is not so much the high degree of superabundance of work, compared to people, as the circumstance of there being any superabundance, which gives the favourable alternative to the labourers, and enables them to compass liberal remuneration. We are so moderate as only to seek the removal of one person out of ten; but this moderation will not the less attain the result designed, when some auxiliary correctives are applied to give a propitious bias to their minds.

CHAPTER IX.

MEANS OF STRENGTHENING THE FEELING OF SELF-RESPECT IN THE LABOURER.

SECTION I.—*Education.*

If any person now in the world object to the education diffusing amongst all classes of the people, it may fairly be observed, that his censure comes one generation too late. Even if the will existed, on the part of those in authority, education cannot now be checked. The thews and sinews of the intellectual giant are formed, and all that remains for us to do, is to infuse the moral principle, and to direct its mighty energies to a useful purpose. Order, prompt obedience to the laws, and all the perfections of civil liberty, must hereafter depend upon the mental cultivation of the people, and upon the circumstance, whether this object is attained by the individual exertions of the people themselves, or whether the state, with provident zeal, steps in and facilitates a high and extended acquisition of knowledge. It is probable that the apprehension, sometimes entertained against the injurious degree of power which instruction is supposed to give to the lower

classes, thus lessening the intrinsic superiority of the higher classes, will gradually abate. The state of public opinion, at the present time, bears an analogy to the ingenuous youth just fresh from his study of those authors whose writings convey an animated picture of the deformity of vice, the sublimity of virtue, and of the glowing means which should be taken to improve society. His mind is tinged with ardour, and filled with generous enthusiasm, respecting the ideal perfectibility of man; by degrees, as experience suggests new images and reflections, his ardour subsides; a more subdued tone takes possession of his thoughts, and, in the maturity of his understanding, he is content with amendments practically attainable. Let us hope that the body of the English people is still sound; and that, though flushed with fond anticipations respecting the advantages of public liberty, which on all sides fill their thoughts, they will gradually become more temperate, and, like the youth described, on dismissing their matin dreams of speculative excellence, and learning experience in the full developement of their powers, they will cease to pursue theoretical phantoms, and will attend to the practical concerns of life. It should be the business of the state to enlarge this experience, and to accelerate the intellectual growth, as the surest mode to avert the rash innovations, or the fanciful experiments, which a young extravagance may inflict. Is any mode so desirable or efficacious, as solid, judicious, and comprehensive education? Ignorance, in the

present constitution of society, is one of the greatest evils that can afflict a nation; and, it may fairly be asserted, that out of a hundred deplorable misfortunes which have arisen in the world, retarding the natural advancement of civilization, ninety-nine are attributable to this single cause.

Independently of the humanizing effect which knowledge must have upon the mind, it acts in a remarkable degree as an artificial want, and ought to be encouraged, if viewed solely as a commercial or economical question. Of all tastes, which, when once formed, young men will be anxious to gratify, that of reading is one of the strongest. Money will be saved in order to purchase books, and to procure that money, work must be steadily performed. In this point of view, therefore, literature ought to be encouraged as widening the range of expenditure, in the same manner as we would encourage the people to wear good coats, or shoes and stockings. But to multiply illustrations respecting advantages is a superfluous task, and we may pass to practical considerations.

The mode of carrying a plan of national education into effect should, in a great degree, be arranged by the ministers of religion. A division of labour in all parts of our social system, as well as in mercantile occupations, need hardly be too much adverted to, and there is abundance of opportunity for this division in the object before us. It would appear expedient not to lay down a uniform and prescribed system

in the first instance, but to allow a laudable rivalry to display itself amongst different clergymen, as to the wisest mode of conducting education, so that it may be an education of circumstances and rules of conduct, as well as of the elementary parts of reading and writing. When a number of plans had been carried into effect, these might be carefully collated, and a general plan thus founded on experience, or extensive induction, selected for national adoption. By these means a wide field would present itself for the exertions of the clergy; they would have an opportunity, by useful zeal, to recover the ground they have lost in the affections of the people, they would find reverence for their character increase, and the performance of their spiritual duties facilitated; and it is probable that ere a generation elapsed, the force of public opinion, now loudly heard in denunciation of the extent of their emoluments, would settle in another direction, and would manifest itself in approbation of liberal endowments being placed at the disposal of a highly educated class, to purify by the graces of literature the leaven of aristocratic and commercial wealth.

To establish a school in every parish, and a library of the most useful books for the use of the labouring classes, would, no doubt, be the basis of the plan selected; and it would be easy to combine with the preliminary education of the children such further steps of instruction on useful subjects for those grown up, as would keep alive proper feelings, and cause

the elementary education to be properly directed. Reading, writing, and arithmetic, in a certain sense, may be considered as tools; they can do nothing of themselves; they facilitate the attainment of certain ends; and it is at that time of life when character is first formed, and when the usages of the world make a strong impression, that is, at the age of eighteen to twenty-one, that counsel chiefly is required from an able monitor to use these tools to the best effect. Exertion, therefore, should be most sedulous at this period, and no system of parish instruction can be considered complete, unless means have been taken to secure the proper attainment of this education of circumstances.

It is by no means designed that instruction should be gratuitous; it is an important advantage that it constitutes an artificial want; and consequently it may in time form an habitual expenditure as thoroughly identified, and as indispensable in a labourer's outgoings, as a hat or a coat. Independently of this consideration, gratuitous education is manifestly unjust to, and inflicts a deep injury on, a large portion of the community; upon that class, for example, just one step above the common labourer, who maintain their own independence, and are indebted to no class for assistance of any kind. Let us imagine two descriptions of labourers, one at ten shillings per week, the other at fifteen shillings,—what are the qualifications, let us ask, that cause the higher wages to be given? In the aggregate of cases, it will be

found, that it is because the individual has received some elementary education, and, therefore, is more enabled to perform certain services than his less fortunate neighbour. Now, this individual at fifteen shillings per week, probably, with great exertion and saving, has paid for his own education, naturally expecting that it would give him relative advantages whenever means of employment presented themselves. If, therefore, another is educated gratuitously, and brought up to his level, it is obvious that a deep injury is inflicted on him in consequence of new competitors arising, and the labouring class generally being placed upon the same footing, while the personal expenditure and meritorious exertion of each individual is so very different. The state of industry, most probably, will not permit of higher wages to be given than ten shillings and fifteen shillings a week, respectively. It does not follow that the fund which governs industry will be increased by the gratuitous instruction; and, therefore, the individual who defrayed the expense of his own education, runs the risk of having his wages reduced. He finds discrimination can no longer be used; there is no means for him to receive remuneration in proportion to his outlay; his employer merely regards the qualifications of different candidates, without attending to the means of their attainment; and thus, preference ceasing according to the intrinsic merit, those gradations which are so useful and necessary to the well-being of society are destroyed.

Exclusively of this view of the question, there is something peculiarly engaging in a parent defraying, out of his own earnings, the cost of educating his children. It awakens many amiable qualities, and creates an interest in the little domestic circle relative to the performance of tasks, which animates and warms the feelings in a degree very different from the cold indifference which seems inseparable from charitable instruction. On the part of the child, a feeling of gratitude is awakened which strengthens in age; and which, even in the society of the homely village, causes a tear in mature manhood to be dropped at the shrine of departed parents, when the fruits of this early outlay have been abundantly reaped.

Section II.

Mechanics' Institutions.

The various institutions which have sprung up in all the large towns, have been of signal benefit to mechanics, in a variety of ways. They have occasioned earnings to be more beneficially spent; have lessened the frequenting of alehouses; and have induced the young men to remain single longer than they would have done, had no such institutions existed. These institutions, therefore, act in a double capacity;

as an artificial want elevating the standard of living, and causing more sedulous attention to be employed, to compass the means of partaking of their advantages; as a moral engine supplying occupation to the mind, and consequently, by giving the operative resources analogous to the club, the theatre, and the assemblies of his employer, creating restraint in respect to the postponement of marriage. Assistance not scantily bestowed, nor confined to the narrow means of the operatives themselves, should be given still further to extend these beneficial institutions. Every town should possess one; and in each should be a large apparatus; and popular lectures on chemistry, mechanics, and the more useful parts of natural philosophy; and also in practical and political economy should be occasionally introduced. It is impossible to doubt that large private subscriptions would be obtained for this object, were they set about in a proper manner; this, indeed, seems a fit subject for the exertions of the district court, or board of management for the labouring classes; and as an auxiliary object, their exertions could hardly be better directed.

It is curious to trace the effects upon the mechanics, when they behold popular experiments in chemistry, or natural philosophy; and, perhaps, the metaphysician as well as the philanthropist cannot enjoy a richer or more instructive treat than to place himself quietly in a lecture room and observe the eager looks,

the half suppressed ejaculations of surprise, and the ardent enthusiasm which attends the execution of an attractive experiment illustrative of some interesting point of natural philosophy. It is well known how the imagination of the lower classes, which has little activity from want of culture, is roused almost to violence when it is excited by intellectual visions, with which it is not familiar; hence the susceptibility to new impressions, and hence also the effects of political excitement at popular meetings. It should be the object of the philanthropist to allow this faculty to remain undiminished in intensity, but to direct its exercise to other pursuits more permanently interesting, and more congenial to order and real happiness. Were we to select two towns, and imagine in the one an institution, possessing the requisite advantages to produce upon the mind the palpable effects just depicted; while the other was devoid of such an establishment; and were we then to attend to the topics of conversation amongst the operatives themselves, during the time they are at work, as well as in the hours of recreation, we should find that, in the latter case, boisterous discussion on politics consumes the day; while, in the former, a quiet and inquisitive feeling displays itself, each individual longing for the hour of fresh instruction. Which description of statesman is most friendly to the ends of civil government, he who would repress such institutions, for fear of giving the multitude too

great strength, or he who would encourage them with the view of giving a proper direction to their thoughts, and wielding that very strength to a useful purpose.

Section III.

Public Parks.

Whoever has travelled on the continent must be struck with the liberal accommodation of parks and public walks, which, in the suburbs of large towns, are appropriated to the enjoyment of the lower classes of society. Nothing of the kind is to be found in England; and the labourers have a just right to complain that no means for wholesome recreation are provided in the great manufacturing districts, where the inhalation of pure air is so great a luxury. The advantages resulting from places of this kind are to be appreciated in more senses than as appertaining merely to considerations of health. They inspire feelings of content and gratitude, which attach the people to the legislature, and to the scenes of their birth. The humbler classes perceive that an interest is taken in their welfare, and they accordingly

resign those envious feelings of discontent, which characterize the population of every country who fancy that munificent acts of the legislature are designed to benefit the rich, while nothing is done for the poor. As the means of diversifying the enjoyments of the young, the establishment of such places must be extremely beneficial. At present, a young labourer has no enjoyment but the alehouse; his situation, it can hardly be too frequently urged, seems debarred from those inducements which might prompt him to imitate the example of the middle classes, in respect to settlement in life. The difference in the degree of enjoyments relatively compassable by the two classes, operates, as well as the allowance system of wages, in occasioning the disparity in their respective increase of population. To every resource presenting itself to a young man in the middle class of life, as to the means of keeping his mind occupied, in order to strengthen restraint, whether moral or selfish, we design a corresponding resource on the part of the labourer. We can neither dispense with selfish gratification nor moral admonition; and the labouring classes have not fair play, if we permit the moral and the selfish restraint alike to operate with the better classes, while we rigidly insist on confining the labourer to the former. With all our efforts, it is to be feared that we shall not be able to preserve the proportions; but there is no reason why the utmost exertions should not be impartially used.

In preserving those parks, and keeping them in proper order, it is possible to devise means to strengthen habits of industry, and to serve as rewards for industrious labourers in their old age. Let the parks be placed under the care, protection, and keeping of old men, distinguished for a life of industry, who have become superannuated. With them, in certain cases, might rest the power of admission or exclusion; and a regulation of this kind, in many cases, would operate efficaciously upon the visitors. Any labour required in keeping these places in proper order, should be performed by paupers; and the resorting to this mode of work would tend to ornament the immediate vicinage, and at the same time, serve to keep the paupers employed.

In addition to this new accommodation, it seems expedient, in all large towns, to throw down those crowded courts and alleys, where poor families congregate, and where, removed from observation, filthy habits are acquired, alike destructive to health and morality. It is found, by experience, that wherever the population enjoys extended space, so that every family, as it were, is exposed to observation, a more elevated standard of habits exists, no matter how limited may be the earnings of the labourers; too much pains, therefore, cannot be taken on economical, as well as benevolent grounds, to secure the means of this free observation, and to throw open all places to public scrutiny. On considerations of health to the

community at large, little need be said in favour of these designs. A distinguished character described Hyde and St. James's Parks as the lungs of the metropolis; it would surely be desirable to have such lungs attached to every town, and adapted, not only to the pleasures of the wealthy, but to the recreation of the humbler classes. The advantages of these places would not be local, they would operate beneficially upon all ranks, occasioning a proper distribution of people in those places where their labour was most available. Agriculture has reached its limits; every future increase therefore of population in this country must settle in towns; and it is expedient, not only to establish a high state of habitual wants, but to make a town residence as agreeable as possible, so that the supply of agricultural labourers would flow to it freely and voluntarily; leaving the quantity of labour in the country within the proper proportion required for the cultivation of the land.

As a matter of pure justice, extensive measures, similar to those proposed, are called for on behalf of the people. During the last twenty years, immense sums have been expended in public undertakings, designed to promote the enjoyment of the affluent classes; but nothing whatever has been done for the labourers. While expenditure has thus been partial in favour of the former, very different have been the effects of taxation. By the taxes on tobacco, malt, beer, and other articles, consumed chiefly by the

lower classes, they have contributed an overwhelming preponderance in amount to the public exigencies. Is it too much to hope, that some slight recompense will be awarded in works of manifold utility, designed for their immediate benefit.

Section IV.

Life Insurances.

On tracing the progress of society, we discover the invention of institutions, designed at first only for the affluent, progressively extend, till all are brought within the circle. Life Insurances, may we venture to hope, may be a case in point. This has been termed the most beautiful application of the science of probabilities to the affairs of life; and in truth it is so. Why should it not be extended to the labouring classes; for to them, of all others, it must diffuse the greatest benefits. Many individuals, in receipt of good wages, may be able to spare a certain sum periodically; and, from a regard and affection for their offspring, they may be desirous of leaving a little property at their death, in case they are untimely cut off; others again, in the active period of life, may have the means of accumulating, but

their minds may be haunted with the dreary prospect of poverty in old age, and to provide against this contingency, they would wish to secure a certain annuity, to keep them, during the evening of life, free from want, from charitable assistance, or from irksome labour disproportioned to their declining strength. Frequently, on referring to cases of distress in the families of the working classes, we behold girls, decently brought up, thrown destitute on the world, from their parents being hurried to an untimely grave, by unforeseen sickness or accident; and we cannot but feel most desirous that there should be some institution to provide against such calamities, fruitful of prospective as well as of immediate evil. Let the district court, then, establish a life insurance office, for the exclusive insurance of the lives of labourers. The subject of such insurances is now well understood; suitable tables might easily be framed, with very little trouble, to meet all ordinary cases; and a most valuable collection of facts be obtained, relative to births, marriages, and deaths, the period of natural longevity, and all such interesting questions, which would more than compensate for any little inconvenience which the district court, or certain members of it, might encounter in keeping the books, and attending to the general execution of the measure. In a short time this country would possess an accumulation of curious and truly useful statistical facts, serving as a never failing guide for the solution of many important points. There seems,

really, little difficulty or expense in the case. It is merely extending institutions, laudable in themselves, and not interfering with established offices, which, being formed for the accommodation of the wealthy, operate upon a large scale.

It is a well-ascertained fact, that habits of saving in the middle classes are acquired and strengthened by the practice of life insurance. A similar habit arising would be of vast importance to the labouring man. On reflecting that he would forfeit all the advantages of the insurance, in case he neglected to make his payments regularly, he would be careful to save a sum out of his wages periodically. The establishment of a habit of this nature is of primary importance: it induces a concentration of attention to the welfare of his rising family, in order that they may not disperse in extravagance that which has been provided with such judicious care. Besides the security against disastrous accidents, or premature death, a useful habit, once confirmed, is likely to grow, and in each stage strengthen the disposition to accumulate. Such is found to be the case now in respect to the savings banks; and it is merely designed to extend the principle through a wider circle, and meet numerous contingencies, against which those useful institutions cannot provide.

Section V.

Use of Luxuries.

It is no part of our plan to advert to topics belonging to finance, or state economy; but we may be permitted to observe, that an alteration in taxation would be attended with many advantages to the labouring classes. Were the entire of the population habituated to the use of tea, coffee, sugar, and such articles, it would be difficult to estimate the extent of the benefit, not only upon commerce, but upon personal habits. So far as commerce is concerned, there would be a necessary increase of manufactures to pay for those articles, and there would be a consequent encouragement of shipping conveying the exports, and the home produce, creating a prodigious increase of general employment, and bettering the condition of the labourer. But while this beneficial operation is taking place in one direction, the advantages resulting from altered habits, and greater attention to family duties, are still more striking. What, let us ask, is the wisest mode of curing drunkenness, and those scenes of depravity which surround the gin shops in all our towns? Assuredly, by the establishment of some counter gratification which will suit the taste of the labourer. Other beverages can exhilarate

quite as well as ardent spirits, when once the habit is fairly formed. The first step is to give proper opportunity, by lowering the price of the articles used in these beverages, and bringing them within the labourers' reach. Let us effect an entire change in the relative facility of gratification by the change in price; and from the gloomy picture of the labourer, lost to self-respect, slovenly, emaciated, and paralytic, solitarily stealing into the gin shop to take his deleterious infusion, we may behold the animated picture of the same individual, amid the circle of his own family, participating in the social meal, and enjoying all the gratification which springs from domestic intercourse. Amongst every branch of the family many estimable habits must arise; greater tidiness, superior cleanliness, and numberless such domestic advantages, will prevail, when all parties are desirous of bestowing their mite, and of contributing to each other's enjoyment. A drunkard's house is always the scene of sloth and misery; and thus it is not merely the baneful expenditure of money which merits condemnation; there is the neglect of family duties, and the destruction of respect and affection, not to speak of the acute privations which all must endure from the diminished earnings consequent on the time lost during the prostration of the drunkard's faculties.

The general measures designed to elevate the feeling of self-respect have now been detailed. Though the regulations are numerous, one pervading principle, it is conceived, runs throughout; and they will all be found, notwithstanding the diversity of details,

to tend to a common centre, and to form a general plan distinguished for its unity, as well as, we hope, for its comprehensiveness.

On a former occasion we expressed our belief, that serious objections could hardly be urged in any quarter against the great undertaking of elevating the condition of the labouring classes. The very mooting of objections, as to the raising the rate of wages, would be not only novel in itself, considering the existing distress, but it would be a proof of the success of our measures; and therefore, having performed the task proposed, we might stand excused from further explanation. But, in reality, these objections at any time are groundless, and it will ever be found that the advantages resulting from an elevated reward for labour are not exclusive, or confined to the labourers themselves, but pervade all classes of the community. Inseparable from high wages is superior remuneration for services of every description, and all who act as agents, or otherwise, will enjoy larger commissions; that portion of profit, also, which goes to compensate for the skill of the master producer, will be augmented; and, in short, an improvement will take place in the pursuits of all who are actively engaged in productive industry. High profits and high wages can exist contemporaneously in a country like England, where the unproductive classes are so very numerous. The capitalists, collectively, have merely to determine the rate of profit, and the unproductive consumers must acquiesce.

In another point of view, some objections might

arise. By raising the rate of wages, it might be supposed that the export trade, inflicting a serious injury on foreign commerce, must be diminished. But it can be demonstrated, that the extent of foreign commerce enjoyed by this country depends quite as much upon the power of domestic consumption, as upon the seeming cheapness of our manufactures. At the present moment, in all the foreign markets, there is a demand for bills in payment of the manufactures exported in place of produce; a sure proof that it is the comparative inferiority of our consumption of foreign commodities, and not the relative dearness of our goods, which limits the extent of foreign trade. What, then, is the most judicious mode of supplying the primary impelling power to extend this trade? assuredly, by raising our internal consumption; by taking off the products of foreigners to as large an extent as possible; and, were this done by improvement in the condition of the great body of the people, we should never hear a single syllable respecting the difficulty of finding a vent for manufactures in foreign markets.

Another species of objection may arise. Too much influence, it may be alleged, is given to the labourers; they will acquire manners of sturdy independence, destroying that subordination and discipline in the social system which long has been the characteristic of England. In point of fact, nothing of the kind would occur. Though the condition of the labourer is elevated, it will be found, that, throughout every one of the mea-

sures proposed, there is a controlling superintendence rewarding merit, punishing demerit, and thus preserving the reciprocal relations of comprehensive benevolence on the one hand, and gratitude on the other; and so long as these exist, the feeling of self interest would prompt those in subordinate situations to exhibit a becoming courtesy of manners. The operative has nothing to gain, every thing to lose, by that dogged uncouth assertion of fancied independence, which sometimes is mistaken for the perfection of civil liberty. We design the same relation to exist relatively between the lower and the middle classes, as now is witnessed between the latter and the higher orders. It is a great mistake to imagine that comfort in worldly circumstances impairs the gradations of rank. A physician attending a family of rank, performs certain services, and receives remuneration of a superior order; does the circumstance of his possessing the choice to remain in his house, or to attend his patient, give an uncourteous tinge to his manners, or cause the service to be less efficiently performed? Why in principle should the labourer be viewed differently? Is there any insuperable barrier to his becoming comparatively polished and aware of his own interest, with improved habits and notions respecting the gradations of rank? When the trial is fairly made, it will be found that the rudeness which, in the minds of the superficial, is associated with a high reward for labour, is quite ideal, and at best originates from defective education. Independently of this con-

sideration, it should never be forgotten, that you cannot have the submissiveness of manners and all that servility of solicitation consequent on abject dependence, which sometimes pleases those who only regard the external surface of things, without beholding also the dissimulation, the fawning sycophancy, the knavery, the artful falsehoods, the disposition to fraud, and the thousand vices which are the unavoidable attendants upon extreme poverty. Even these are not always smooth and docile; whenever the hypocritical garb is cast aside, the character displays itself infinitely more objectionable in regard to insubordination and insolence, than ever could happen under a different organization of things, where the working classes being comfortable had no inducement to violence of any kind.

Finally, it may be stated, that politically there would be danger in placing the body of the people in the independent state designed for them. But surely very slight reflection must satisfy the mind, that a result diametrically opposite should in common fairness be anticipated. When was ever prosperity the enemy to order and good government? and, on the other hand, where could discord or dissatisfaction meet so powerful, so willing, so reckless an ally as poverty? At the present moment no real friend of humanity, or patriot, could witness a crowd assembled in any of our great towns without perceiving that the popular feeling, even its very breath, is tainted and vitiated. A deep and settled rancour against the laws or persons in authority and the higher classes of

society as a separate order, appears in their aspect; and every now and then is heard an ejaculation, marking the recklessness of their designs, the malignant joy they would feel at the overthrow of our most cherished institutions. But after the spectator has beheld this fearful and unnatural manifestation of national feeling, awakening the most gloomy thoughts, were he to turn from the crowd anxious to escape speedily to his home, in some retired lane his attention might be arrested by an individual silent and solitary, with downcast eyes, immersed in thought, and with a haggard and care-worn countenance quietly pursuing his way, as if anxious to escape from the surrounding tumult. If the observer be disposed to follow this individual, he will find him retire to meet in his home the greetings of his wife and family, and to surrender his earnings for their solace and assistance. If a little further curiosity be manifested, this individual will be discovered to be in all likelihood the best workman of his class, and from the very consciousness of merit still buoyed up with hope that better days will smile upon him. This, then, is the individual, and others like him, untainted with the political vices of the day, and unsophisticated by evil communication, that we seize upon as the nucleus around which to form our new institutions; where daily new materials will be drawn in until the circle becomes so extensive, that all without may be treated as delinquents; rendering popular clamour as feeble in disturbing public tranquillity as it is now extensive and dangerous.

CHAPTER X.

IMPROVEMENT OF IRELAND, AND CONSEQUENT CHECK TO THE EMIGRATION OF LABOURERS TO ENGLAND.

In any inquiry respecting the labouring classes in Great Britain, it would be improper to omit the consideration of the means to check the emigration of Irish labourers. Few will dispute that this circumstance has inflicted much evil on this country; and it is indispensably necessary for future prosperity to have it removed. Poor laws in Ireland will not alone accomplish the point, other measures affecting the entire people being first required.

Section I.

Causes of the Poverty of Ireland.

When man is viewed with reference to his social condition, two prominent desires appear conspicuous; the desire of eventual gain, and the desire of immediate enjoyment. When the first is in excess, it con-

stitutes the character of a miser, or a being who neglects present gratification in order to heap up provision for future wants, which possibly he may never live to gratify. When the latter is in excess, it constitutes the character of the spendthrift, who thinks not of the future, but, from strong passions and feeble powers of reflection, proceeds in his life of pleasure, though future misery must await him, and inflict privation the more severe from its contrast to the preceding career of buoyant enjoyment. In drawing a comparison between these two desires, it is evident that the former ought considerably to predominate in every well regulated mind. Man is morally bound permanently to better his own condition, and still more particularly that of his family or the beings he brings into the world. There must, therefore, be accumulation, or, in other words, the desire of eventual gain should predominate over the antagonist feeling, in order that he may possess the means of bequeathing to each of his children a sufficient sum to enable them to maintain the rank in society to which they have been educated. What thus applies to individuals equally bears upon the character of nations. It is quite possible for the collective character to exhibit either a desire to accumulate or a desire to spend, greatly preponderating; and the ultimate results in either case will show that the same evils attendant upon individual imprudence attach to the nation. When however, the question is viewed in a national light, the injurious consequences of the one desire, and the

beneficial results of the other are more apparent, because the effects are more durable. When there is a natural desire to accumulate, riches will abound, though they may not be immediately enjoyed; the emoluments derived by the better classes, or those with whom industry originates, may be comparatively small, from the disposition exhibited by the great majority of the inhabitants to engage in productive industry, thus extending competition; but associated with this disposition will, of course, be an abundant and diversified source of employment to the mass of the people. It is only by active production that the general inclination to heap up riches can be gratified; and the capitalists cannot attain this end without availing themselves of the instrumentality of labourers, who, finding their services greatly in demand, will be prompted to ask, and enabled to secure liberal remuneration.

But, on the other hand, when the opposite desire forms the chief characteristic amongst a people, the great body of them must be in extreme misery. There being no disposition to accumulate, the desire, on the contrary, being to spend, an opportunity is not presented for employment of any kind; and the labourers, therefore, if population in the least continues to increase, will find themselves in that deplorable situation in which there are a hundred candidates for the performance of the smallest service.

Such then is the cause of the poverty and commercial degradation of the people of Ireland: it is the national

predominance of the desire of immediate enjoyment which inflicts upon the peasantry in the first instance, and eventually upon all classes of society, the severe suffering. This great cause will be found to account for many anomalies which have occasioned much controversy, philosophical as well as political, respecting the condition of that country. It serves as the key to decipher many complicated and confused questions, which otherwise, judging from experience, have baffled the efforts of statesmen for several generations.

It must not be supposed that this desire predominating in the national character necessarily presumes that all persons are actuated by the same feelings; it can manifest itself in many ways; and it will be useful to elucidate these, in order to exhibit the mode in which poverty first appears, and the correctives that must be applied for its removal.

In the first place, when persons engaged in productive industry live up to their profits or income, it is obvious that there can be little accumulation: the whole of that net gain, which in ordinary branches of trade ought to be increasing with a view to reproduction, will be absorbed, and the traders will have no resource but their immediate businesses; should these decline, or, which is the same thing, should others arise to divide employment with them, they must fail in their pursuits. Were population stationary, the ordinary state of things might continue without great evils appearing, provided the aggregate expenditure did not exceed the income. The nation

might be comparatively poor when contrasted with surrounding states, but as the desire to spend merely kept pace with the wealth annually produced, every person's condition in life would remain unchanged. But when population is increasing, if the expenditure be equal to the production, there must be a positive decline in individual business. There will then be no property to bequeath to rising families in proportion to the increase of numbers, and in every part of the country a general complaint will exist as to the injurious increase of competitors. Such is the case in Ireland, where the expensive establishments of merchants, traders, and shopkeepers of every description, contrasted with the means of the individual, form a subject of surprise to every English traveller who visits that part of the empire. It has been calculated that the shopkeepers of Dublin spend more than double the income of a similar class in London, considering their general means of business. The consequence is, there is no appearance of accumulation of any kind. The vicinage of a large city affords a pretty good criterion of judging of the real prosperity of the trading population; and, on travelling through the County of Dublin, few persons would hesitate to decide that the accumulating principle amongst the inhabitants of the metropolis is exceedingly feeble indeed. The native residents would ascribe other causes, but the philosophical enquirer, most probably, would retain his opinion.

In the second place, the collective desire to spend more than is expedient for the growth of national wealth may manifest itself in a general indisposition to trade. Individuals may prefer a life of pleasure with moderate means to one of irksome exertion, even if the gains be great. Few will dispute that this is the general characteristic of the Irish people. So long as the better classes of society allow pleasure to predominate over active employment, it would be egregious folly to suppose that the mass of the people, who must depend upon others for receiving their wages in useful occupation, could rise to a comfortable condition. The truth is, in Ireland there is an aversion to trade, and that aversion is created and fostered by a sense of pride, which leads them to despise the pursuits of manufacturing industry. A small squire possessed of a few acres of land, and probably overwhelmed with debt, will look down upon the most extensive manufacturer, gifted with a large fortune, as an inferior being unworthy of his acquaintance. The whole current of thought, the manners, habits, hereditary prejudices, certain aristocratical notions, usages at the vice-regal court, the enjoyment of all trusts of honour, and the advantage of a superior station in case of possible conflicts at law, all conspire to keep alive this lamentable sense of fictitious dignity. It is not difficult to deduce from this feeling many fruitful causes, not only of commercial but of moral degradation. Virtually speak-

ing, in many parts of Ireland the middle orders can scarcely be said to exist; for, on the one hand, those who should legitimately belong to that class by connections and birth, attach themselves to the skirts of the great, and claim their privileges; and on the other hand, those who by industry might raise themselves from obscurity to station, are treated as inferiors, which damps their ardour and impedes their efforts.

In the third place, the poverty of the country may be perpetuated without attaching habits really censurable to the majority of the people. There may be no disposition to spend in excess; but then, the prevailing habit may be to retire from business after a comparatively small sum, that is, small contrasted with other countries,—England or Scotland, for example—is realised. It is a curious circumstance, that the same sum of money which an Irish merchant considers sufficient to justify his retirement, is just about the same as a London trader would consider indispensible for commencing business with a reasonable prospect of success. When we consider this feeling to extend throughout an entire community, its effects on production are analogous to the two former cases, and a large body of the people consequently must remain without any means of employment. In Ireland there is a low standard of wealth, that is of that degree of property which a man ought to possess to entitle him to consideration in the community; and national predilections are adjusted to this low standard, which causes the ratio of ordinary consumption

to appear great, when contrasted with the higher branches of production.

In the fourth place, the aggregate expenditure may predominate over the income, not from causes traceable to feelings or desires, but to ignorance or to an imperfect acquaintance with the principles of commerce. If a trader be seized with too extensive an ambition, or seek, as Buonaparte once described of a French merchant, to establish his fortune by a single effort like a general of an army, in place of the slow, gradual, and incessant efforts of simple accumulation, it is to be feared that he will fail in his endeavours, and in his failure he will entail injuries on the community at large. This diseased feeling exhibits itself in a disposition to overtrade; merchants with comparatively small capital enter into expensive speculations; they surrender the power of selling or retaining merchandize on hand at pleasure; and consequently the thrifty trader, generally residing in another country, takes advantage of their pecuniary difficulties and strips them of their entire profit; too frequently, it may be said, of part of their real capital, when any is possessed. It is obvious, that the cautious trader is injuriously involved by these acts of his improvident neighbour; for there cannot be two rates of value of any given commodity at the same time; when sales are constrained to be effected in consequence of the needy adventurer being pressed for payment of his bills, prices are depressed; and, therefore, he who has made his arrangements in the wisest

manner, suffers from the indiscretion of the speculator, who, not content slowly to accumulate, seeks from national ardour at once to amass a fortune.

On reviewing all those circumstances, it would appear that every one of them is applicable to Ireland, and certainly, taken in conjunction, the statesman would have little difficulty in ascribing the manifold evils which afflict that country to the primary operating cause which has been stated. It would be a curious investigation, to trace the unavoidable evils which must be entailed on every country where the desire of spending is in excess; and it would be no less curious to exhibit the constant efforts which a people so circumstanced display, to palliate their own conduct, and to throw the entire blame upon the existing government.

Let any really impartial enquirer conceive for a moment the different questions settled which now form the subject of public discussion in Ireland. Is it to be imagined, that, so far as the social organization of society is concerned, the adjustment of any one of these speculative topics would improve the condition of the labourers. In what particular mode could it correct the defective character in respect to industry? It is difficult to suppose that the desire of spending would be one jot the less; that the aversion to engage in manufacturing industry would be diminished; or, in short, that there would be an alteration in any one of the manifestations of the generic cause of commercial deterioration we have described.

Supposing that all the fancied evils were redressed, and that a fresh race was about to commence, the Irish people on the one hand, and the nation to whom they look for satisfying their wants, distinct from mere subsistence, on the other; the north of England or Scotland for example: at the termination of one brief generation, the result would be that the annual production of Ireland would all have been spent, exhibiting no accumulation whatever; and if there were more people to divide the little employments necessary within the country, their condition, generally, would be even worse than at present: on the other hand, the accumulations in the north of England, or in Scotland, would have proceeded with unabated effect. In plain words, the whole of the profit which ought to have been realized, and to have remained in Ireland, would have proceeded across the channel, no matter whether the absentees returned or not, so long as they continued mere consumers: thus exhibiting precisely an analogous case to what is found in every town where there are thrifty individuals in one part and spendthrifts in the other. Merely a little time suffices for the transfer of property, and the sons of the prudent are sure to enjoy the possessions of the imprudent race.

If we take an extended range of the different nations throughout the world, that have attained a considerable station, we shall find that the principles here attempted to be established present the means for determining the degree and causes of their ad-

vancement. Throughout all Germany, according to the energy of operation in one of the two prominent desires we have illustrated, is precisely the extent of their commerce and the condition of the people. In the northern parts, where commerce is held honourable in itself, and where the desire to accumulate is extensive, where, consequently, a high standard of wealth prevails, the great body of the people are comfortable in their circumstances; and if not the speculative, at least the substantial part of civil liberty is enjoyed in considerable perfection. In Austria, the disposition to commerce and the accumulative principle are weak; the body of the people are comparatively poor, though the rate of increase of population does not occasion the consequent distress to appear so conspicuous as in other places. In Holland, long distinguished as being the first in Europe for the accumulative principle, the bulk of the labouring class is exceedingly comfortable; some experienced judges, indeed, describe it as quite unrivalled, notwithstanding the density of numbers. In Belgium, though retaining some seeds of primitive industry, the accumulative principle appears in a diminished degree, and their hatred of the Dutch, in recent times, is alleged to proceed quite as much from the superiority of the latter in robbing them of trade, as from the assumed arbitrary domination of civil government.

It is necessary to attend carefully to the degree of increase in population, before we decide upon the

results of the superiority or inferiority of the accumulative principle to its antagonist desire. The condition of the peasantry in Spain would be most wretched, if population were increasing at a rapid rate. The aversion to manufacturing industry, and the indisposition to persevering occupation in business, would cause the aggregate production to be relatively small to the consumption progressively augmenting from increase of numbers; and consequently the distress must be extreme. In Naples, where the desire of spending is great, we find, from the number of lazzaroni, that the difficulty of procuring employment is beyond that of any other capital in Europe; though the kingdom consists of an exceedingly fertile territory, and is intrinsically capable of supporting three times the extent of the present inhabitants. Unless a great change be speedily effected, the population in the great towns in Ireland will soon be worse than the lazzaroni of Naples, no matter in what part the seat of government be placed.

Wherever we go, indeed, we shall find an exemplification of the general principle, not falsified, it is conceived, in any one instance; so that from a wide induction it may be pronounced a universal law, in respect to the social condition of every nation. When both desires are strong, but the superiority of efficacy, nevertheless, appears on the side of accumulation, society advances most rapidly. In the United States of America this condition of things is exemplified; both desires appear in an energetic form; all merchants,

manufacturers, traders of every description, live liberally; they support good houses, consume good food, luxurious wines; spend considerable sums in clothing, and embellishments of every kind; and these habits display themselves throughout all classes of the community, and in every state of the Union. But associated with this disposition is the still stronger desire to accumulate property. The whole soul of an American centres in this object. If he live expensively, let it be admitted that he works incessantly. The standard of wealth is exceedingly high,—almost the same in New York and Philadelphia as in London. The merchant, therefore, rarely thinks of retiring, and the consequence is, he labours sedulously in business, even when large means are accumulated. The aggregate amassing of property greatly predominates over the income spent, and the country makes rapid advancement. This pervades the entire race of people, and, occasioning very high wages, puts a good deal in the power of the American labourer; quite as much, let it be observed, as the opportunity to resort to the back settlements. But with him the energy to work is quite proportionate to, and indeed exceeds, the disposition to spend. No class of mechanics perform a greater portion of actual labour than the Americans. A nation, distinguished for this general habit, cannot fail to advance most rapidly in commerce and general intelligence. It may be proper to remark, that this habit seems hereditary to the Anglo-American character,

unconnected with any considerations respecting the form of government. It existed, in some degree, previous to the declaration of independence, and is now found in many parts under the British dominion.

The most judicious state of things that can exist, in regard to the two desires we have now expatiated upon at some little length, seems to be a high energy in each, but a superiority of efficacy in the accumulative one, a little beyond the relative increase of population. New articles, that are invented for the conveniences and gratifications of life, would thus afford increased means of employment, and preserve a high rate of profit to the capitalists. In a healthy state of things, profits may increase as well as the wages of labour; and if the accumulative principle be fairly adjusted with that of the desire of spending, the new discoveries, and inventions of additional luxuries and refinements, that minister to the enjoyments of life, present a never-failing resource for the exertions of capitalists, and, consequently, amongst all classes of the people there will be progressive improvement.

Section II.

Remedies.

Perhaps it will appear, from the delineation which has been given of the causes of the commercial evils of Ireland, that correction is even more difficult than

is alleged by ordinary statesmen, too prone, as they generally are, to magnify obstacles in order to palliate incapacity. A long seated and deeply engrafted prejudice has, at the very outset, to be removed; and, it need hardly be observed, that no description of laws are so difficult to the legislator as those designed to change habits and character. You may accomplish entire revolutions in commerce, finance, criminal laws, and all such matters, where an edict of the legislature suffices, on the instant, to rescind established regulations, and to introduce a completely new system; but with manners and customs nurtured from infancy to manhood the case is different, and the materials to be operated upon are stubborn and refractory. But if our direction be right, it is better to fail than to labour in a contrary line, even though, in the latter case, popular applause, or temporary success, should attend our immediate efforts.

It need hardly be observed that a country, exporting grain and provisions to the amount of £5,000,000 annually, must possess great inherent capabilities for commerce, and for ultimately securing the substantial comfort of the people. We hope also it will be clearly understood, that any delineation of the commercial state of Ireland applies to those with whom industry originates, or the better classes of society, and not to the peasantry. He who observes the energy with which Irish labourers work, when under proper encouragement and example in England, will not be disposed to pronounce that any obstacle to the

improvement of the sister kingdom is to be found in the habits of the peasantry. A disposition has occasionally prevailed to characterize them as irreclaimably indolent, and by nature hostile to that steady industry through which alone amelioration can be achieved. But, in recent times, this imputation has been effectually removed. The deplorable disturbances, periodically prevailing in the southern and western districts, have been unequivocally traced to that feeling of despair which men give way to when they become reckless of consequences, and when the means of absolute existence become unattainable. Distress engenders outrage. No force of illustration is required to show that, when a choice only presents itself in which mode man seems fated to perish, he seizes upon that which affords a slight glimmering of hope, and braves the terrors of the law as the least unwelcome alternative. The maintenance of order requires that, externally to the world, every public councillor and good citizen should assume a sternness of demeanor, and not only loudly rebuke, but zealously cooperate to suppress this violence. But in the solitude of the closet, these parties must admit that, in this lamentable condition of things, the peasantry themselves are not originally to blame. What can a poor man do, if all the surplus food goes to England to pay for the luxuries which the better classes consume, while no attempt is made to fabricate these articles at home. It is quite apparent that there can be no employment, no useful work of any des-

cription; and thus the peasant may perceive abundance of food surrounding his own door, but which passes away from him, whilst he himself is starving. It is surely, therefore, worse than idle in the legislature devoting its exclusive efforts to the elementary education of the lower orders; imagining that, to teach them abstract principles of order, is at the same time to disenthral them from misery and crime. It is the better ranks of society to whom we must look for improvement; it is they who furnish the means of employment; and our great primary object should be to cause the accumulations of internal industry greatly to exceed the national expenditure. We have, therefore, to consider, first, what species of industry can be devised which is likely permanently to flourish, and next, what measures should be taken to induce the people to prosecute that industry with efficacy and perseverance.

After the supply of labourers has reached a point fully adequate to the high cultivation of the soil, any increase in their number directed to that branch of industry must be deemed a waste of labour, and must tend to impair, in place of aid, the national resources. No matter how some writers, on the grounds of humanity, may declaim against the impolicy of crowding towns with a manufacturing population, depending upon precarious commerce, it will ever be found that eventually the substantial interests of the poor are promoted by fixing them where their labour is most profitable; and if in that new situation they

suffer distress, the cause is attributable to the misdirection of manufacturing resources. It is not an extravagant statement to affirm, that in Ireland four persons are engaged on the soil where one would suffice. Should we succeed in removing three-fourths of this population to other branches of production, either immediately required by the inhabitants, or capable of interchange in foreign commerce, allowing the remaining one-fourth to raise the usual quantity of agricultural produce, it is evident that we augment the wealth of the country in a threefold proportion. On all sides it is agreed, that the establishment of manufactures must be resorted to at last, if the real object be to advance the interests of the Sister Kingdom. The climate precludes the idea of profitably introducing to any material extent the culture of raw produce, as the materials of manufacture to be afterwards worked up in Great Britain. Forced exotics, on a national scale, are not adapted for the purposes of trade. After the novelty of temporary excitement is past, they will sicken and die, leaving the evils augmented, which they were designed to alleviate. Even were this exclusive direction to diversified agriculture desirable, two millions of people are quite competent to its perfect performance. When the small territory is considered, surely it is evident that, sooner or later, a new outlet will be requisite for advantageous labour. On the other hand, it is freely admitted that to the introduction of any of our popular manufactures into a country supposed likely to become

an active competitor in trade, must encounter serious objections. But, in justice to British manufacturers, it must be owned that they are gradually becoming more enlightened; and the predominant impression is, that their own field for enterprise will be extended by raising an integral portion of the empire from poverty to comparative prosperity. Manufactures judiciously introduced into Ireland will not tend to compete with those of England in foreign markets. For a very considerable time, they must be designed for domestic consumption. At present, a great portion of the Irish labourers possess but the scantiest and meanest description of clothing; and their cabins exhibit a scene of filth, devoid of those articles of accommodation deemed indispensable in the English cottage. There is thus an extensive resource, and sure market for the production of clothing, and those articles of comfort appropriate to the use of the poor, in case a steady internal trade were once originated. But let us even conceive this prosperous industry carried further, and that a considerable export ensued; still, consequent on that prosperity, will new articles of manufacture be required, or an augmented use of those already in existence, which the more advanced state of England must always supply. Were the English manufacturers, in place of speculating on the prospect of enlarged markets in distant regions, to contemplate the condition of Ireland, and to consider the effects, in case the Irish labourer were elevated to the condition of the English, his family

clothed, and his cottage properly furnished, they would speedily acknowledge that the regeneration of eight millions of people presented their most attractive mart for enterprise, and they would become the foremost champions for forwarding measures likely to attain so desirable an end. Even supposing that the cotton and woollen manufacture flourished in Ireland, and that she exported largely to markets now supplied by England, it does not necessarily follow that any injury would be sustained by the latter. Conjoined with the increased ability on the part of Ireland to export, will be an increased ability to import; and if she thus takes away more of the commodities of foreigners, those foreigners may in turn widen their market for the profitable admission both of Irish and British goods.

Fortunately, thus the true interests of all classes of the community are benefited by the extended establishment of Irish manufactures. But the difficulty is, how is the undertaking to be accomplished. When at the present period warehouses are gorged with unsaleable merchandize, the fruits, it is alleged, of over production in every department, how can it be possible for an Irish aspirant to thrive? In this advanced stage of our undertaking, we are spared the trouble of dilating upon this topic. Granting that temporary difficulties may thwart the attainment of the ultimate principle, if the means taken be judicious, and if our former reasoning be valid, they will possess sufficient invigorative growth to survive the struggle;

and the sooner the trial is made, the less durable will be the period of difficulty. If the British manufacturer be now forcing sales without adequate profit, it is not presumable that he will continue to do so: a reasonable remuneration is in the progress of time naturally expected; and keeping this ultimate level or tendency of things present to the thoughts, it does not appear that there are any peculiar circumstances in Ireland to prevent her becoming a manufacturing country.

One of the chief causes of doubt which has hitherto arisen on this subject, proceeds from the belief that individuals who pursue their own advantage consider all the contingencies of commerce; and that, if there were any chance of profit, however remote its realisation, many candidates would start up eagerly to embark in its pursuit. Under the peculiar circumstances of Ireland, several reasons combine to prevent the settlement of manufacturers from other countries. The English capitalist considers that there is no security for property; and certainly it is not surprising that apprehension should prevail, when the accounts daily given in the public journals, descriptive of the inefficiency of the civil power, are perused. Security of property beyond all shadow of molestation is the chief requisite to enable any country to flourish; and not only the absolute possession of this blessing, but the removal of all doubt upon the subject, are indispensable in new measures. Were this point attained, English capitalists would settle in that country. Some

might wish to witness the success of Irish manufacturers, in justification of their step before they ventured finally to transport their means; but this consideration would not deter the majority, assuming that there were no opposing reasons to influence their conduct. They might conceive it singular that, with all the acknowledged advantages of Ireland, there are so few wealthy men in business; but, on personal examination, they would not be slow in determining the cause, and they would promptly embark in speculation from the presumption that the intrinsic opportunities for success were abundant.

With respect to the Irish themselves, the examples of English manufacturers settled amongst them would have a most beneficial effect. It would improve the habits, elevate the artificial wants, give rise to more accurate notions of business, in addition to the immediate advantage of extending employment to the lower classes, and banishing the seeds of dissatisfaction. What is required, therefore, is a measure that will efficaciously accomplish a double object; that will, in the first instance, give to the English capitalist an assurance that his investments in every description of manufacturing industry will be secure; and, secondly, that will sow the seeds totally to alter the sentiments of the Irish middle classes, stimulate the creation of master manufacturers, and elevate the opinion of their utility in their own thoughts, and in those of the community at large.

This object may be accomplished by establishing

towns with certain corporate functions; the inhabitants to be devoted to productive industry; and making cotton-spinners, woollen manufacturers, linen-bleachers, tanners, soap-boilers, and such like trades, conservators of its interests and guardians of its rights, with magisterial privileges. It is designed to create all the benefits of corporations without the disadvantages; a task by no means so difficult as it would at first appear. The number of these towns must naturally depend on circumstances, and the available extent of local resources. One might be established in the south, another on the banks of the Shannon, to avail itself of the great advantages of that noble river, and a third in the northern part of Connaught. The manufacturers in these towns would naturally be divided into the employers and the employed. The latter may be formed into associations, avoiding impolitic restrictions as to admission, but confining themselves to their respective trades, in order to secure an efficient division of labour. It is not intended that these associations of operatives should possess legislative functions or controlling power; the object is to create amongst them greater facility in forming societies or institutions, to aid the management of the poor; also to connect their thoughts with the prosperity of the town, to raise their interest in local concerns, and to give an honest sense of pride to their pursuits, so as to occasion sedulous attention to learn a trade. In case an appellation were required, junior brethren might be an

appropriate term. The master manufacturers might be termed elder brethren, and divided into companies; to these every person resident in the town, and practising some branch of productive industry satisfactorily defined, should be admitted. A certain number out of these companies, according to their relative extent and importance, might be elected to manage the concerns of each branch of trade, carefully watching over all measures likely to promote the general interest. Agreeably to other institutions of a similar nature, these persons so elected might be called common councilmen, in whom should be vested the election of the magistrates or aldermen. It is not necessary to dwell minutely on the details of the particular constitution it might be proper to confer on each town; it is only necessary to keep in mind the commercial disease requiring cure in the different parts; and it would be easy to select the most approved English corporation to serve as a model; keeping in mind that the grand object was to make commerce in itself honourable, and to throw the protection of property, the management of the police, the levying town taxes, the control over expenditure, and all such fiscal regulations, into the hands of the industrious classes. There is then a guarantee both for economy and zealous exertion. No religious or political distinction of any kind should be even hinted at as a barrier to any magisterial office. Neither should the advantages of birth, nor party favour, nor the patronage of the crown, be allowed to exercise a

dominant influence in swaying the appointments. Successful industry must be alone the footstep to distinction. At the same time, it might not be prudent peremptorily to exclude persons of respectability residing in the immediate neighbourhood, and unconnected with business, from filling the office of magistrate. A gentleman of character and independence giving assistance to the corporation would be of much benefit, and, being spontaneously elected by the industrious classes, it is presumable that his attention would be zealously devoted to the promotion of their interests. Whether the appointment of sheriff should be entirely vested in those towns might perhaps form a subject of after discussion, but the chief desideratum being to protect property, and to give all the inhabitants a full assurance of impartial administration of justice, it undoubtedly appears expedient to grant the privilege.

In carrying these measures into effect, the chief difficulty presents itself at the outset. The very materials on which we have to work are to be provided. But a little experience will suffice to confirm our position, that master manufacturers once created will soon establish the workmen; and the belief that these may be procured, arises from information recently obtained that many respectable individuals would be induced to remove from Leeds, Birmingham, Manchester, or Glasgow, in case security of property were established, and they themselves participated in the administration of the law. Govern-

ment must, in the first instance, make a few appointments of magistrates, giving to them the power of adding to their number, though subject to a little restriction, until the full quota allowed by charter to the respective towns is completed. Afterwards, on a vacancy occurring, the election should rest with the town council, who, if the plan be feasible, would ere long be sufficiently numerous to exercise their franchises. Much discrimination is undoubtedly required on the part of government; but the argument presumes a sincere desire, on the part of the imperial legislature, to advance the interests of Ireland. It is superfluous to insist on strict impartiality, because if that quality be wanting, or if speculative politics be introduced, all efforts at improvement must be abortive.

It would be difficult to specify any particular line of manufacture which it would be proper to introduce into each of the towns. Those should be selected which were suited for the domestic consumption; and the spontaneous goodwill of the people for their own productions, aided by associations in all the towns, should establish a local interchange of manufactures, progressively improving in quality. If, on mature consideration, any branch of industry presented itself, auguring future success, or tending to displace foreigners in supplying the English market, it would be prudent to give such branch encouragement. In consequence of the advantages which workmen derive from the option of promptly

changing their employment, when distress overtakes them in a particular line, it would be impolitic to confine the towns to a single branch of manufacture. Each may have a distinctive feature; nothing more. From local circumstances woollens seem the most appropriate in the southern town. Another, near the great morasses or bogs, may be characterized for its hempen manufacture, together with coarse linens, to compete with those of Germany. Consequent on the success of these leading employments, in all their ramifications, will arise other branches of prosperous trade, diffusing, in an accelerated degree, their beneficial results upon agriculture, the neighbouring villages, and the country at large. The march of industrial reformation once fairly set out, though beginning with infant paces, will soon reach gigantic strides, rendering immediate superintendence of the legislature unnecessary.

Should there seem reasonable presentiments of success in these new establishments, few persons can, it is conceived, object to the simplicity of the means, or the practicability of their adoption. It is true several political writers have condemned all corporations, as obstructing the natural operations of the productive classes, and tending to encumber, in place of assisting, the legitimate channels of industry. But, in this precipitate condemnation, a very limited portion of the effects of corporations has been viewed. The enquirers have been so occupied in dwelling on the inexpediency of apprenticeships, the difficulty

which an enterprising man might feel in settling himself in a particular town presenting a favourable opening for his handicraft, the obstacles in procuring the freedom of a company, together with similar objections, that they have imagined these to be inseparable from corporations, and also that no counter benefits existed. It may be truly asserted, that some of the most envied characteristics of England, political as well as commercial, are derivable from her corporations. Townships, guilds, and callings, are identified with our most venerable laws, and have established, through all the vessels and arteries of the state, that mutual reliance and nice dependance upon which the health and harmony of the whole depend. Politically speaking, the moment you locate a man in a particular vicinage, surrounded with his fellows, you awaken a sense of civil rights, which leads him to respect the laws as the best protection to himself, the instant that accumulations of property commence. Economically speaking, the instant you place a man, with definite functions, in a town, you raise his sympathies, cause him to have his eye directed upon his neighbour; and when that neighbour, or any other associate, greatly betters his condition by industry, you stimulate him to the utmost to imitate his example.

Advantages such as these require little illustration to refute the objections frequently urged against all attempts to restrain the free unlocated agency of labour. But it will be kept in mind, that there is no intention to obstruct at present, or in future,

the settlement of either operative or master manufacturer in any of the meditated towns. We must endeavour to profit by experience; we will not imitate the municipal institutions of Dublin or Londonderry. Though some corporations are exclusive or objectionable, and indeed all in England, having fulfilled their original design, are now susceptible of some improvement, yet it by no means follows that the intrinsic principle of establishment is bad. Those that merit condemnation exhibit abuses incident to narrow legislation, when the principles of commerce were imperfectly understood. But are antiquated errors necessarily to be perpetuated in the new foundations of Ireland? The peculiar condition of the country must always be present to the thoughts; and our preliminary observations will shew that corporations contain in principle the chief materials or ingredients required for the promoting of Irish industry, at the same time that defects are avoided. The Irishman is averse to business, because trade is contemned. Want of security of property deters the English capitalist from migrating. Now we change the notions of the former; and when we proclaim to the capitalist, go and settle and you will have legal control over those circumstances that affect your property; you will have a voice in passing bye-laws, giving the surest guarantee that you will enjoy adequate redress against violence or aggression; you may, in a word, become a magistrate, interested in the maintenance and execution of the law; is it not

manifest that new opinions will prevail, and enterprising alacrity succeed to fearful hesitation, in the investment of property. Suppose at the very outset, where the chief difficulty is encountered, that a proper search was made in our manufacturing districts for some eligible person, to take over with him the chief agents for conducting his business, to whom should be given favourable grants of land in the new town, and who on arrival should be appointed a magistrate, agreeably to the plan proposed, is it probable a refusal would be made? Or does any person doubt that a few grants, similarly bestowed, would not produce a thousand times more benefit, than sums lavished directly on the operatives to encourage their assiduity. Shape out the mode of procuring employment, and you will find that superior manipulative skill will develope itself without bribing for its discovery.

In tracing a little further the effects of the desired institutions, it is reasonable to anticip...e that an animating influence upon the better class of the Irish would be promptly diffused. Men oppressed with idleness, sulkily upholding a contemptible pride, and striving to screen the expedients of poverty, would be seized with different sentiments the moment they found that not only the substantial enjoyments of life were attainable by industry, but that privileges in law, control over their fellows, and estimation in general society, were derived from its pursuit. If British manufacturers were to settle amongst them,

they would soon be taught that no insurmountable barrier stood in the way of national regeneration. Fiery contentions would subside in the calm pursuits of commerce. From the portals of our new town halls we proclaim, far and wide, open to all without distinction or partiality. Our humble manufacturing pursuits of weaving woollens, dressing flax, and such homely occupations, might proceed unobtrusively, and would be deemed too low in dignity to meet with opposition from political partisans. But this forbearance would permit our measure to operate as an emollient corrective with the great mass of the people. It would afford an illustration of impartial justice in the protection of property, that must strike immediately and palpably upon the Irish peasantry. The aid given to the general execution of the law by the new institutions would be extremely salutary. A wretched order of labourers, scattered over a great district, and far distant from any particular place where magistracy are permanently congregated, must always feel a certain exemption from restraint. They are able to collect in great numbers, unawed by that concentration of authority which can promptly act with combined responsibility, and which possesses both the will and the ability to check excesses. Judgments and punishments from such tribunals would be viewed, not as at present, as savouring of oppression, but as the certain consequences of misconduct.

Thus, in all the grand points in which reform is re-

quired, we lay the foundation stone; security of property, industry, order, flowing from each other in natural succession. Let not the legislature exclaim that the pursuits of industry should be left to find their own level. This dogma, which has too often been used by eminent statesmen, as the palliative for incapacity, applies not to the measure now advocated. It is wisdom, in a far advanced community, to abstain from attempts to shackle particular employments, or to bolster up one branch of industry in preference to another; but the legislature never appears more in its noblest functions than when, with comprehensive prescience, it recasts the manners of a whole people, where abuses or objectionable customs have long been engendered. Who that looks around and contemplates many flourishing cities on the continent, would refuse to place their founders amongst the benefactors of mankind. These cities were established, amid the darkness of the feudal ages, as asylums of protection against violent outrage and lawless oppression. The worst features of villanage still exist in Ireland, both the oppression and the outrage. And shall our legislators neglect the practical commentary, and allow themselves to be immeasurably outstripped by the unenlightened rulers of these remote periods of history.

Section III.

Auxiliary Measures.

Amongst the auxiliary measures, designed to improve the social or commercial economy of Ireland, the introduction of Poor Laws is undoubtedly the most prominent. Though not sufficient by their single operation to cure the evils incident to poverty—and indeed, since they merely distribute but do not create wealth, deserving the appellation of correctives rather than of remedies—yet so soon as a proper organization of industry is established, they must act efficaciously in preventing a recurrence of those grievances which have latterly acquired so dangerous a magnitude. In place of expatiating at length, and in the abstract, upon this question, which forms the leading topic of discussion whenever the subject of poor laws is introduced, we have deemed it more judicious to show the mode in which a general law may be framed for all parts, allowing the justificatory arguments to present themselves to the reader in the natural progress of inquiry. On a careful review of the measures designed for the welfare of the labouring population, we believe it will appear, that there is not one single topic adduced by the opponents of Irish poor laws which has not been answered. Mo-

difications in respect to local details, no doubt, are requisite; but the general principle being established, the peculiar adaptation of it to circumstances is a much easier task, though we freely admit that judicious discrimination should always be used to time the introduction of any important measure to the existing susceptibility of the public mind. Sooner or later the law must be enacted, and it behoves all classes of the Irish people to assist, and to hasten the preparatory measures, so that the benefit may be general and not partial.

It is curious to observe, that the identical objections, started by Irish proprietors against poor laws, the dispassionate inquirer would select as the most cogent reasons for their introduction. An entire change would be effected in the tenure of the land, and in the proportion of produce which goes to each class engaged in cultivation, the landlord, the farmer, and the labourer. This change in agriculture must materially assist the measures relating to manufacturing industry. It will extend local trade and consumption, and widen the field for internal enterprise. Agriculture is at all times justly esteemed the most extensive and important branch of employment. It is truly remarked, that no circumstance evinces the advancement or the civilization of a people, so clearly or so explicitly, as the degree of skill and capital possessed by the farmers, together with their general respectability. Ireland, judged by this criterion, affords melancholy proof of her backwardness. Notwithstanding

the great export of grain and provisions, the cultivation of the soil is far from eliciting the entire of its advantages. Such is described to be its natural fertility, that, were improved modes of husbandry introduced, bread might be substituted for the potatoe amongst the Irish people, and yet the export of corn to Great Britain be increased. The subdivision of holdings in land must unquestionably be characterised as the origin of this imperfect husbandry; and, though great changes have recently occurred, it is yet questionable whether the agrarian system has received its final doom. It might be imagined that landed proprietors, seeking their own interest, would get rid of a confirmed nuisance; but, in extenuation, it is justly said, that fear of direful consequences amongst a dispossessed and exasperated tenantry prevents many from pursuing their inclinations, and adopting the ordinary remedies of effectual clearance. Were it really true, that nothing operated to obstruct this consummation but the dispositions of the tenantry, or laudable benevolence on the part of the landlord, we might leave natural amendment to its own salutary operation. But it is to be feared, that amongst some of the landlords or sub-possessors, there is still an itching palm to set up small parcels of land to the highest bidder, and to keep their tenantry in abject dependence, in order to reap large emoluments from their distresses.

When the national resources are developed to a high degree, the land should be cultivated at a small outlay of human labour: considerable capitalists will

then become farmers, and avail themselves of skill and acquired resources in pushing the soil to its most generous yielding. The capitalist necessarily requires a remunerating profit on his investment: the larger his capital, the greater his share of the produce and rents thus relatively fall, when compared with the entire return derived by the actual occupier. The chief part of the produce, in this case, is obtained by a person in the middle sphere of life, of high utility, who spends it on the spot with a view to reproduction, and not by a landlord living on revenue, who spends it unproductively.

In place of this beneficial system of cultivation, let us attend to the existing practice in Ireland. No capitalist, no skilful and enterprising farmer, actually cultivating the land, as in England, is to be found. With partial exceptions, two parties only exist, the lord and the vassal. The redundancy of population occasions keen competition for every unoccupied piece of land, of which the rent receiver, in some of the gradations between the great proprietor and the lowest middleman, avails himself; he demands the highest rent, and, as a natural consequence, reduces the cultivation to the most prolific description of production, the potatoe. The poor occupier is, in his own defence, compelled to raise the article which is produced in the greatest quantity, with the least labour. From the refuse of his own food he rears pigs, for which, generally, he obtains a liberal price; and out of this source he pays his rent.

It really appears from this state of things that the landlord flourishes on the poverty of the country. The export of provisions secures the means of remitting the rents, and, if the aggregate value be considered, the Irish landlord derives four-fifths of the produce of the soil, whilst in England the proportion of this class is not one-fourth. The produce now raised, under ordinary circumstances, would bear no comparison, in exchangeable value, to the produce grown under an advanced system of farming; but the sale of the pigs operates as an exception to this rule, and extremely favourable to the landlord. The adjacency to Great Britain, the certain sale of the salted pork, at high prices, give the means of paying not only a large proportion of the produce actually raised, but a high monied rent. Three circumstances, therefore, seem in combination to promote the interest of the landlord, if not in perpetuating poverty, at least in his doubting the benefit of a change.—First, the means enjoyed of deriving high monied returns from the sale of his tenants' pork, which probably would not exist under an improved system of husbandry. Secondly, the circumstance of no capitalist existing between him and the labourer to divide a portion of the produce: in England, and still more in Flanders, this portion, belonging to the capitalist, is the largest of the three allotments divided respectively by the landlord, the capitalist, and the labourer. Thirdly, the miserable condition of the labourer himself, which occasions him to be content with the least possible remuneration or allotment for his services in cultiva-

tion. It need hardly be observed, that all the produce has eventually to be divided, in some proportion or another, between the parties named; the less, therefore, which is given to the labourer, the more must be enjoyed by the landlord. In recent discussion it is urged that a seeming, not a real, advantage is derived by the landlord. Avidity is alleged to defeat itself. He does not get his rent paid, and it would be better to have one substantial farmer for his tenant than crowds of submissive dependents, to flatter his sense of importance, at a high nominal rent. When matters are pressed to the extreme, this undoubtedly is the case; but the question should not thus be summarily dismissed, nor should the word of a few excellent landlords be explicitly taken for the intentions of their entire order. If the utmost exaction be demanded, driving the peasantry to despair, then, indeed, total loss may ensue; or if carelessness in collecting rents be suffered to creep in, a needy race of men will undoubtedly take advantage, and evade their payments; but these are exceptions to the general rule. Let us picture a landlord, or a middleman, anxious, like the majority of mankind, for large personal profit; not a devout convert to speculative humanity; well acquainted with his tenantry; nicely judging their capability to pay; and never letting any opportunity slip of stepping forward to exact the utmost contribution from his dependents when depicting the offers of other competitors; is it to be contended, that such a person finds no personal benefit in the existing subdivision of the land? Were the choice left to

such an individual, he would probably prefer potatoe cultivation to a more improved system of agriculture. He derives, from the causes assigned respecting the provision trade, considerable rent, so long as the country is quiet; and were there the intervention of farmers, in the proper sense of the word, he fears his own income must be endangered; or, if not an affluent middle man, that considerable labour and exertion, on his own part, must succeed to a life of idleness and pleasure. Absentees, or men who cannot bear to witness afflicting scenes of penury, may thus give their testimony in favour of large farms; but this should not be received for decisive or universal proof. There can be no doubt that the multiplying of freeholders in former times, for political purposes, has conspired, with pecuniary considerations, in creating these injurious subdivisions of the soil. The public voice has, accordingly, been loudly raised in condemnation of this system; and a natural expectation prevailed, that improved agriculture is already in progress. Many landlords, in different parts of Ireland, have certainly acted in conformance with popular opinion; but a slight examination into facts will shew that this step is partial. Few persons consider, or reduce to figures, the extent of the clearance that is required to carry the capabilities of Irish agriculture to its most perfect developement, that is, to raise the largest possible quantity of produce by the smallest outlay, or waste of labour; it would reach to nearly four millions of people; a prodigious number,

contrasted with the few thousands that have removed to the large towns.

It cannot for a moment be imagined that these remarks sanction, even by remote implication, the abrupt measures which have been taken, in many cases, to clear estates of an impoverished peasantry. There are few scenes of more heart-rending distress than to behold the poor dispossessed families, devoid of house, home, or comfort of any kind, bereft of hope itself, wandering by the road side, and taking shelter at night under the trees and hedges. The remedy, in this case, is infinitely worse than the disease. But it is indispensably necessary to set forth the ultimate end designed, and the obstacles requiring correction. Other measures take precedence, in order to prevent the infliction of suffering upon the peasantry, or pecuniary loss upon any portion of the inhabitants. When these are achieved, the assurances of humane and highly distinguished Irish proprietors inspire the hope, that a general measure, strengthening social improvement by fiscal regulations, will not be unwelcome; and since the fear of immediate pecuniary injury may predominate over the hope of large prospective advantage, with the general order of landlords in Ireland, rendering them indisposed to originate a change spontaneously, some measure should be devised to improve agriculture, even were there no secondary or co-relative consideration, to merit attention. Poor laws seem to accomplish the double object. The

public opinion has finally decided against the small freeholds, and there is no mode of combining practice with theory, in preventing their recurrence, so advantageously as establishing a tax which will perform this service, as well as the more important benefit of immediately suppressing mendicity.

A deplorable picture may probably still be drawn of the peasantry, driven from the scenes of their childhood, and those occupations they most cherish; and, owing to this predilection for agriculture, it may be deemed chimerical in future, as well as at present, to increase the size of farms by any species of compulsion or constraint, however gentle in its application. Were the competition for small farms to continue undiminished, it would indeed be violent legislation to place the great majority of the Irish population in opposition to the necessary procedure attending the fiscal remedies; but that competition would undergo a change. All our measures are designed in regular progression; employment, steady and permanent, is provided, after the redundancy is removed. The vacancies amongst the superseded peasantry are not to be again filled up with an impoverished and degraded class; a respectable order of yeomanry will arise, which is the consummation of our agricultural plans, and without which no country can be great, prosperous, or happy. The occupier of the land, that is, the farmer, will derive the largest share of its produce, and, it need not be stated, that the greater the quantity of produce

which goes to him, the more beneficial it is for the nation. In other words, the greater is the capital and the respectability of the farmer, the higher is the range of internal consumption; the less waste is there of human labour; the larger is the supply to defray the cost of the conveniences and embellishments of life; the more is foreign produce promoted; and, above all, the greater is the chance of a proper adjustment of the supply of labourers to the demand for their services continuing through successive generations.

It is sometimes contended, that the establishment of a poor rate must trench upon capital, but it is easy to perceive that this is a mistake. Virtually speaking, at the present moment, there is no capital employed in the cultivation of the land in Ireland; that is, capital in its proper sense, with a view to reproduction. If we take the produce of the land to amount to five pounds an acre, and imagine that four went to the chief and sub-landlords, if a tax were established absorbing ten shillings of these four pounds, it would not inflict any injury upon capital, so far as commerce is concerned. It does not interfere with any fund productively laid out with a view to subsequent cultivation; the outcry, therefore, against a tax of this kind, as interfering with capitalists, assumes that the term capitalist is synonymous with landlord, and thus a very erroneous idea of the effects of the rate upon industry is conveyed. In reality, the capitalist would be greatly benefited by its introduction, as an extended consumption of

commodities would ensue. He can be served quite as effectually by extending the range of consumption, thus creating internal trade, as by diminution of actual expenditure. A British manufacturer, if the option were proposed, would probably prefer the materials of his business, his woollens, or his cottons, being doubled in consumption, to a reduction of rates which he now defrays, and considers identified with his outgoings. The case is analogous to the Irish capitalist; we can view him in no other light than as a farmer, or a manufacturer, or a collateral vendor, whose interest is identical with these two classes. The first, the farmer, must be benefited by the establishment of a poor rate, because the circumstance of its introduction induces the landlord to resort to persons of his class to occupy the land: it must be beneficial to the manufacturer, because a higher standard of habitual labour will be established in the country, and, there being more articles consumed of every description, business will be extended, giving higher personal if not higher proportional profits. It is useful occasionally to refer to the meaning of the term capital; we need hardly remind the reader that it is both material and immaterial, and that in either case it is the result of antecedent labour. When, therefore, we provide an opportunity for the exertion of this labour, the advantage to capital, in one of its forms, must follow as a natural consequence; and supposing that the reciprocal trade amongst the labourers themselves were to cause new articles to be brought into exist-

ence, through the instrumentality of the rate, it is evident that it should rather be considered to assist than to thwart production.

As an auxiliary measure, the establishment of village bazaars, similar in principle to that described in the eighth chapter, might be peculiarly useful. To form a market in different villages, where the dispossessed peasantry would desire to settle in the immediate precincts of their early associations, could not fail to improve the collective husbandry of the country. A demand must arise for many implements of agriculture, for proper ploughs and harrows, rural machinery of every description; and these villages would thus become the legitimate places for the settlement of carpenters, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, harness-makers, and such trades, who, still living on the property of the immediate landlord, would permanently add more to his rent roll in this ameliorated state of society, than if they continued to deface the land by cuttings and carvings under the potatoe system. So obviously indeed is the permanent interest of the landlord promoted by the change, when security of property and a thousand such considerations are taken into account, that we deem it superfluous to touch on this theme in discussion. On large estates a single proprietor could have little difficulty in establishing a village under his own control, and those who possess property, or reside in England, would be prompted to introduce a few experienced artisans in the trades named, who would take apprentices amongst the

most promising Irish lads; and thus in a short space of time effect an entire change in occupations and manners. In other parts, where property was more divided, a number of gentlemen might coalesce in establishing these villages and rural bazaars, keeping in view the introduction of those trades chiefly dependent on highly advanced husbandry. It being already remarked that a strong predilection for agriculture exists amongst the peasantry of Ireland, no matter how miserable their lot, it seems judicious to consult their feelings, and to make the necessary removal to towns or villages as palatable as possible. All the attractive resources, therefore, previously depicted with regard to Great Britain, should be gradually introduced. The establishment of bazaars in all parts, devoted to the sale of articles chiefly consumed by the labourers, it is presumable would tempt the fancy, and introduce new tastes. The art of the sempstress is possessed in considerable perfection by the fair daughters of Ireland, as the inhabitants of the western hemisphere can freely attest; and by greatly extending this employment for their own immediate gratification and local interchange, a very large branch of valuable business, in making slops and apparel for foreign markets, might soon start up, and permanently flourish from the superior cheapness of labour.

Measures such as these would call forth the resources of Ireland; there are now more than seven or eight millions of people living on the most miser-

able sustenance, and consuming scarcely an article which in commerce would be considered to possess exchangeable value, or to constitute wealth. A large portion of the population, after existing redundancy is removed or located, we design to settle in new cities, to manufacture clothing, furniture, decorations, and conveniences of every kind for local consumption, gradually stretching to foreign trade as opportunity might offer; and being, in fact, all superinduced, and new in its nature, it adds to the aggregate wealth of the empire, interfering not with British manufactures in any one form. Another portion of the population we design to produce proper implements of husbandry, and to enable the fruitful soil of Ireland to yield its most bountiful assistance to the general resources. In such an auspicious state of things, the regulations of the two kingdoms would become identical, and the same glowing picture of ulterior prosperity, which has been designed for Great Britain, would equally bless the long depressed inhabitants of the Sister Kingdom.

That collateral measures are required, is not for a moment to be denied, but many of these would naturally follow of their own accord. Absentees, for example, who have frequently been censured for defective patriotism, would reside in Ireland the moment that repulsive inconveniences to the agreeable residence of a private gentleman were removed. Whatever may be the apparent severity of our remarks in respect to Irish industry, and, in truth, it must be admitted that in the dull pursuits of trade the Irish

do not shine, there is nothing to urge against the agreeableness of society; and if travellers of all descriptions are to be believed in their delineations of the manners of the two nations, the anxiety to escape from the insipid frigidity of English society, may one day make Ireland as animated and rejoicing in her numerous visitors, as she is now lonely and destitute. It is unnecessary, therefore, to expatiate on the subject of absenteeism. There is no remedy but the one—to make residence agreeable; and to accomplish this, there is no mode but the one,—to cause industry to flourish. When improvement arises, it will spread in a geometrical ratio. The residence of the nobility and gentry, and the occasional sojourn of visitors proceeding in crowds to view the natural beauties of Irish scenery, will refine the manners, disseminate fashions, and, consequently, extend production.

It is to be lamented that the question of absenteeism is generally viewed in a very narrow sense, as affecting the spending of income alone. Attempts consequently have been made to separate this operation from other circumstances constantly conjoined with it, and thus has originated minute and unprofitable criticism, in respect to the conclusions of economical science. So far as the income of an unproductive consumer is concerned, viewing it detachedly, it matters little where it is spent, whether in Italy or Ireland; but the truth is, this single operation of expenditure can never occur. There are always collateral cir-

cumstances associated, which directly influence production; the degree of energy displayed in it, is not a fixed quantity; it rises or falls according to circumstances, or as it may be acted upon by accidental contingencies. Numerous cases occur in which a nobleman's or gentleman's family appearing in a village church, for the first time after their return from England, causes the native inhabitants to order new coats and gowns, which never would have ensued in case no excitement or new fashions had exercised their criticism. To make these coats and dresses, production itself, inducing counter exertion amongst these individuals themselves, is necessarily extended; and, in point of fact, it is difficult to separate this increase of superinduced production from the immediate and palpable spending of income of the proprietor, though the latter is trivial, compared to the entire play of industry created.

The stream of English nobility, for example, periodically pouring forth from the metropolis, is the signal for brisk trade in country parts; new productions are generated by the example, and industrious occupations arise, forming a reciprocal interchange of production and consumption amongst the immediate handicraftsmen to ten times the extent of the income spent by the gentry, but still strictly depending upon that income as the primary impelling power. It would be the same in Ireland; and as a mansion with closed windows, grass on the door-steps, moss on the walls, and cattle traversing disordered walks, exhibits a bad

precedent, and creates a slovenliness of arrangement in every neighbouring part, so the opposite picture, constant renovation and improvement, new fashions, embellishments, and works of art, must create energy and enterprise in the people, and aid the spontaneous exertions of industry.

There is another species of evil consequent upon absenteeism, which indeed is never disputed. A landlord, desirous of possessing a respectable tenantry, will frequently encourage many experiments in regard to productive industry, which could hardly be attempted unless he dwelt on the spot. Instances could be named of two individuals, of incomes nearly similar; the one has resided in England and received his rents from an agent, who considered his duty fulfilled by merely making his remittances, while the tenantry remained unchanged, and quite content if they could scrape together the accustomed payment. The other landlord has resided on his own estate, and with a view of improving the condition of his tenantry solely for his own advantage, and without any peculiar feeling of benevolence, has caused to be established a tannery and a soap manufactory, improving the neighbourhood, and adding materially to the value of the houses and the rent of the land. The residence of such trades constitutes a great advantage, and it is derivable from the immediate presence of the landlord; he is instrumental in introducing new businesses, and he thus not only benefits the particular locality or the village nearest to him, but the country at

large. It may, however, be repeated, that though absenteeism thus negatively inflicts injury upon Ireland, though much short of the extent popularly supposed, there is no redress or corrective, but striking in with the selfish feelings of the proprietors, and preparing for them an agreeable abode.

Were we to attempt the eradication of all the evils which afflict Ireland, further proceedings would be requisite. But our object is confined to commerce, and to the improvement of the labourers. With speculative politics we do not interfere; probably on another occasion we may state the means by which the deplorable conflict betwixt contending parties may be corrected. In the mean time, even for this purpose, our commercial measures should not be slighted. Constituted as society now is, it may be laid down as a broad maxim, that it is not possible for any people to enjoy order or happiness, or any one of the perfections of civil liberty, unless the majority are comfortable in their worldly circumstances. This must be the commencement in every comprehensive plan of reformation; no matter how much from natural disposition we may contemn the cold mechanical principles of political economy, or seek to restore the 'unbought grace of life, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise,' and all the glories of chivalry, which we admit are not yet extinct in Ireland, obscured as they are by the bitterness of political controversy. This vehemence of contention, in truth, indicates defective education,

and under high knowledge all should anticipate benefit from the existence of two great parties. In time they will be constrained to put forth measures designed for the real benefit of their country, in order to obtain the suffrages of impartial spectators. There are worse incentives to political eminence than honourable emulation, and many of the most commendable measures in England have sprung from the rivalry between Whigs and Tories, each party being desirous to strengthen its popularity. But then, in this case, there were numerous impartial judges to award the palm of superior merit. On the same principle, we see no objection to a continued stand-up fight between the Protestants and Catholics in Ireland; but it is indispensable to supply cool discriminating spectators, who will not only be ready to cheer meritorious efforts, but to repress censurable manifestations of violence which might spring from national ardour.

CHAPTER XI.

MEANS OF GETTING RID OF THE EXISTING REDUNDANCY OF POPULATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

If we have succeeded in shewing that the labouring classes can be restrained within proper limits, in respect to their relative numbers, in case we were to start afresh in a new system of social organization, the task is comparatively easy of removing the existing redundancy. To the various plans proposed for this end, one general answer may be given: let all of them be carried into effect fully and immediately, if there be presumptive proof that they will operate comprehensively and efficaciously. A number of schemes have been detailed, each possessing zealous supporters, who unsparingly censure all who dissent from the one they particularly patronise. But this bitterness of controversy evinces a confined view of the question. The primary object is to get rid of existing evils; and the more numerous the means which present themselves for the attainment of this end, the sooner and more effectually will it be accomplished. Too many valves can hardly be presented

to permit the escape of what presses, in an overwhelming manner, upon the moral and commercial energies of the nation; though there can be no doubt that particular modes of operation may be preferable to others. We shall, therefore, examine the various measures that have been proposed, relating to this branch of the subject.

Section I.

Emigration.

Alienation of inhabitants was at one time deplored as the greatest misfortune, next to positive loss of territory, that could befall a nation, and loud was the censure invariably cast upon the government that evinced a disposition to sanction any system which forced men to seek a happier lot in a foreign land. Closer or more philosophical reasoning on the abstract question has qualified, if not entirely exploded, these notions. It seems now to be admitted, that a redundant population may exist, and therefore, that in certain cases, emigration may be justifiable; but still it is contended, that Great Britain has resources at home to remove redundancy, and that, under these circumstances, emigration is a forced and unneces-

sary expedient. These reasoners, it is to be feared, form too moderate an estimate of the actual evils requiring prompt redress, before any salutary amendment within the country itself can be attempted. If institutions, similar to those proposed in the preceding pages, had been framed half a century ago, in all probability no cause would have arisen to rob the country of any of her inhabitants; but things have proceeded to a most alarming length, emphatically exhorting us not to lose an instant in the application of bold and decisive remedies. Emigration is certainly the most extensive resource, and the question is how it can best be accomplished, to reduce redundancy in the most immediate manner, to benefit the distant colonies, and to occasion but a small outlay to the mother country.

It need hardly be observed, that by the term redundancy of population is meant a supply of labourers exceeding the demand for their services: now, an adjustment can be brought about in two ways: either by diminishing the supply, or by increasing the demand. The supply is at once diminished by emigration; but it is important to consider, that by judicious colonization the demand for labour at home may be increased at the same time. On referring to the state of things in an improving colony, the contrast with an old country, in respect to the remuneration of labour, is so striking, as to create a feeling of surprise that objections should arise in any quarter to bring about a mutual adjustment. The colony is

in great want of the very same thing which is redundant in the mother country. Labourers in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land can hardly be procured at any price; and common sense decides, that mutual benefit would result to the mother country and the colony, by a reciprocal change being effected in the direction of labour. In case wages were tenpence per day in Sussex and eight shillings a day in Yorkshire, few would dispute that it would be advisable to sanction a migration to the latter territory. Why in principle should we view the case differently in regard to a colony? Though oceans roll between the two classes of people, it forms no obstacle to a commercial and maritime nation. The necessity imposed for extensive naval communication may do more than compensate for the inconveniences of distance. There is no reason, therefore, why such possessions should not be viewed as synonymous with the domestic territory, in respect to commercial capabilities or advantages. Through their instrumentality unproductive paupers at home are converted into productive labourers abroad, relieving ratepayers of an oppressive tax. If for example, 300,000 paupers emigrate, the industrious part of the community may be relieved of payments to the extent of three millions sterling annually; and there would, consequently, be this sum at their disposal for other purposes of expenditure. Employment at home must be increased owing to this fund, which previously went to the support of paupers in idleness, being directed

to a productive channel. Many paupers who still remain in the mother country will thus be elevated to the condition of labourers, further relieving the rate payers. But this is not the entire of the advantage. These 300,000 emigrants, settling in a prosperous colony, create a demand for the manufactures of Great Britain to an extent much greater than labourers at home could hope to effect. Settling in an agricultural territory, they will confine their attention to that species of industry which is most productive, and thus, avoiding manufactures for a very long period, they take, as has been truly observed, every made up article from a needle to an anchor from the mother country. In conducting the interchange, moreover, ships are required, with all the collateral trades, rope-makers, sail-makers, and the like, dependent on navigation; so that it is not extravagant to assert that 300,000 paupers, converted into prosperous colonists, would lessen the redundancy to the extent of 2,000,000; that is, by the conjoint operation of diminishing the supply of labourers, and increasing the demand for their services, it produces benefit in geometrical extension.

The first part of the operation, or the getting rid of the inhabitants, can be accomplished in several forms, if we merely seek to diminish the supply of labourers. By selecting persons in the prime of life, or those just married, or about entering into the married state, a much smaller expatriation will correct redundancy, than if entire families emigrate. It

would be easy, at an expense comparatively small, to remove so very considerable a portion of these active labourers, that almost an instantaneous effect might be produced on wages; but although a less intensity of means is thus required to produce a desired end, and at a less expense, yet, for the sake both of the mother country and of the colony, it does not seem desirable to resort to this exclusive selection Whatever may be the effect on wages, it is undeniable that an ill-adjusted state of society would remain, owing to the large relative number of the helpless and the infirm; and, on the part of the colony, a peculiar society would grow up, presenting very different features in the social system to the scenes left behind. It is not humane needlessly to break any ties of kindred or affection; under a judicious system of emigration, the pangs which must reasonably be felt at expatriation should be lessened if possible; and every means should be adopted to secure in the new settlement the same salutary control and counsel of parents, the domestic discipline and form of family government, which exist in the parent state.

Notwithstanding every pains to soothe the feelings and to cheer the despondency of parting, by the awakening of new hopes and prospects, it is possible that love of country may so far predominate, as to render it difficult to procure voluntary emigration to the extent required. This, no doubt, is an exceedingly perplexing point, but the attainment lies between two alternatives—either to increase the encou-

ragement to the emigrants, or to adopt the violent expedient of terminating at once the poor-rates, and throwing the paupers destitute on the world. Were no definitive plan for preventing the recurrence of pauperism proposed, this abandonment of the paupers to extreme destitution would be most cruel. But if the ulterior plans be satisfactory, this charge ceases to apply. It is quite justifiable to seek the attainment of a judicious system, by proposing emigration to the paupers as the only mode of relief, refusing peremptorily for a definite period all parochial assistance. The attempt, however, in the first instance, should be deliberately made to induce them voluntarily to emigrate; and this can best be accomplished by proceeding on a large scale. Where a few would feel repugnance or apprehension in seeking a home in a strange land, a great number would be animated by the sense of mutual dependence, and by a pervading and contagious spirit of hope, strengthening the general disposition to adventure. By these means friends and acquaintances are preserved. If we analyse patriotism, we shall find that frequently it is more an attachment to people, manners and customs, than to the mere localities of place. Let, therefore, the endeavour be made to induce a great body to emigrate spontaneously, in order to preserve old association, constant means of friendly communication, and an exhilarating desire for partaking of common pleasures in a distant region, as well as the fortitude to sustain common privations, and, when once the excitement has

commenced, there will be no paucity of adventurers ready to swell the list. It is not an improbable circumstance, that whole districts might be seized with enthusiasm, if proper means were resorted to for influencing their feelings. A plain description of the colony, of its advantages, its productions, soil, climate, physical circumstances, and its capabilities of affording the substantial enjoyments of life, should be compiled and distributed through all the agricultural districts. A few panoramas, exhibiting the places of settlement, with all their adjacent scenery and peculiar characteristics, carried round all the agricultural villages, would form a truly useful mode of raising the imagination of the labourers, and exciting them to try their fortunes in distant parts; it would, however, be deceitful, and most ungenerous, to proceed too far in this species of graphic temptation.

Though the object is to get rid of manual labourers, and not skill or capital, yet there is one of the superior descriptions of employment which is in excess in the mother country, and which, fortunately, is most serviceable in the colony. Farmers, who rapidly increased in number, in consequence of the great stimulus which was given to agriculture some years back, are now in excess compared with the farms to be let; and, owing to the competition, rents are higher than they ought to be, placing the active agricultural capitalists at a disadvantage. Were means taken to induce these persons to emigrate, and to allow them to select their labourers in this country to accompany

them, it is probable that emigration would be conducted in the most advantageous manner. There is very little doubt that many persons of this description could be found, possessing skill and science, but little capital; and many labourers would be induced to join such persons, who would be timorous in taking a decided step for themselves.

Labouring men, long accustomed to order, strict obedience, and regularity, in an advanced agricultural country, have feelings, in some respect, analogous to those of soldiers in a highly disciplined army. They can follow, obey orders, and admirably perform all the functions required in a subordinate station; but they are not accustomed to think for themselves; they are devoid of enterprise, resourceless, and not at all suited to be placed in novel situations, unless they have a director constantly over them to guide their conduct. Hence, the labourers in the advanced agricultural districts of England, though experienced in every branch of improved husbandry, make far inferior settlers in a new colony to the inhabitants of the north of Ireland or Scotland, who are accustomed to think and act for themselves, however deficient they may be in uniform labour. But if the same relation could be introduced into the colony as exists in the advanced English districts, the superiority, from the concentration of means directed in a scientific manner, would be manifest and striking. It is consequently of great importance to induce a number of this superior description of persons to emigrate, to

whom the ordinary labourers could look in periods of difficulty, and who would introduce those gradations of rank into the colony, which so materially forward the higher branches of industry. Even if the labourers desert these persons in the colony, from the opportunity of setting up for themselves, there is not much injury occasioned. A high remuneration for labour is the natural characteristic of thriving settlements; and though an experienced farmer may undoubtedly preserve his rank, it must be by his skill and not by his monied capital. To hold out suitable inducements for this instructed species of persons to emigrate is a task of some nicety; it can only be done by giving advantages in respect to the settlement of lands, and this brings us to consider that species of regulation which is best calculated to elicit the commercial productiveness and advantages of the colony.

It is designed, as before stated, to make the employed population abroad create employment at home; one branch of the labourers should minister to the wants of the other; and, because all cannot be done at home, a portion is sent to a colony, with which, though a sea divide the parties, the intercourse continues unchanged, and the thriving prosperity of the colony rolls back its fructifying influence upon the mother country.

After mature consideration of all the plans of colonization that have been published, it would appear that the formation of public companies, who would undertake the charge of transporting emi-

grants, is the best calculated for the earlier stages of settlement. These might enjoy certain privileges in the way of trading; but these privileges should not extend beyond such a period as was requisite fully to repay the outlay to which they were necessarily subject, and thenceforward the trade should be thrown open. The particular quarter in which such colony should be established must necessarily depend upon circumstances. Canada being now, comparatively, an advanced country, should be left for free settlers; and, no doubt, the annual emigration to that country will continue to be considerable. In New Holland there is ample opportunity for all new purposes, without interfering with any established trade. If the proposed company or companies take charge of the land, determining to whom and on what terms grants should be given, it might defray the expenses of civil government; but it should not be invested with any other rights of sovereignty. The imperial government would exercise all legislative functions, delegating merely that portion of local polity which related to the arrangement of cultivation. As the increasing wealth of the settlers must, in time, conduce to raise the profits of shareholders, impolitic restrictions on trade, beyond the reasonable preservation of the rights of the company, would be unnecessary. An explicit code of the terms of settlement, and of mercantile regulations generally, could be framed to guard against partial or illiberal constructions of the various grants. The source of profit derivable from the plan would be two-fold: the return of interest

on the capital advanced, in the way of rents, and the emoluments arising from the supply of manufactures, and other commodities, to the colony.

The ability of the colonists to purchase goods from the mother country would naturally depend upon the sale they found for their commodities in return. The distance unavoidably presents obstacles for a large consumption in this country; but it is presumable, that the trade with China, the East Indies, and the islands of the eastern seas, would consume such a portion of this colonial produce, as would encourage in the double interchange a very effective demand for manufactures, and other supplies, from the mother country. By judicious cultivation, some article of commerce in extensive use, and for which the soil and climate of New Holland are particularly favourable, might be produced advantageously to supply the British market. It would undoubtedly be the province of the company to apply itself indefatigably to such a branch of business, as well for its own immediate profit, as to promote the interests of the empire at large.

In addition to the income immediately derived from the lands on which the emigrants settle, it would be expedient to make extensive grants to the company, allowing them to dispose of new lots, from time to time, according to the extension of population, similar to the practice in the United States of America. A considerable revenue would thus speedily be raised, fully sufficient to defray the ordinary charges of civil management. It may

be objected, that it would be difficult to procure funds, and that few persons would be disposed to step forward as shareholders. This entirely depends upon the assistance given, in the first instance, by the government. Were the establishment solely a matter of speculation, unconnected with other considerations, it is allowable to suppose, that capitalists would be reluctant to part with funds designed for distant investment, and of inevitably slow return. But it must be recollected that, at present, all persons possessing property at home are burthened annually with a large expense, to support a redundant population. In the examinations before the Emigration Committee, two or three respectable witnesses stated it as their opinion, that many persons would be willing to pay at once a considerable sum to get rid of this expense: supposing, then, this disposition to continue, if we point out how a return for the first outlay can be obtained; if we couple with it the opening of an advantageous branch of trade, converting apparent expense into ultimate profit; and, if we avoid sinking the investment as a dead weight, and make it saleable in the market, convertible into money, like other descriptions of stock, allowing the investor, when family settlements, incumbrances on the land, or other exigences call upon him, to withdraw his interest entirely; we are certainly warranted in presuming that avidity, not hesitation, would characterize the reception of the shares. It was stated, by persons employed by government to take out emigrants to Canada, that several country gentlemen had evinced

anxiety to nominate emigrants for the occasion. Under a company, shareholders would naturally have a preference in this respect; and this inducement would prompt many landholders to step forward and take an active share in the project, who would otherwise have viewed it with indifference. The emigrants themselves, in a case of this kind, would feel no distrust or unwillingness in leaving the country. They go from this country as agents, to forward the pursuits of commerce: there is laudable enterprize, not degradation, in their attempt. In locating them in a new territory, their faculties will expand in a degree commensurate with the unbounded space before them; and as, in the settling of the land, we awaken an emulative principle, spurring them on to exertion, we expect a new characteristic to be developed, reacting with prodigious energy upon their brethren at home. One of the greatest advantages, indeed, attendant upon a public company, similar to the one proposed, is the widening the range of mercantile ideas, and devising new sources of industry, which otherwise would not have been thought of. The feebleness of infancy may prevent a nation from pursuing many branches of trade so long as no attempts are made by combined effort to make up for individual inability; but single weakness in many becomes united strength, and thus public companies in the new settlement accomplish what, to individuals, appears chimerical.

In Ireland, in particular, we conceive the establish-

ments we have pointed out would be peculiarly beneficial. If companies were established in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, and Belfast, agreeably to the plan proposed, a large redundant population would be removed, while the means of employment at home would be, from local circumstances, peculiarly advantageous to those places. Advantages, in the case of Ireland, would neither be confined to the immediate effects of the labourers removed, nor to the future gains of colonization rolling back upon the country. The new mercantile institutions would improve the commercial character of the people, and induce many to enter into an extensive company who would be loth to embark individually in business. Were success to attend the scheme, numerous branches of manufacture and foreign commerce, in a variety of shapes, must be promoted in Ireland, which it might otherwise take ages to establish. In the new colony cultivation is not confined to articles either for home consumption, or to supply the British market. Considerable external commerce may be conducted with our East India possessions, with China, Japan, and the Asiatic Islands; and this extended concentration of means being definitely planned, and each part adjusted to its proper place, constitutes, in the early stages of colonization, the great advantages of a public company over the detached and scattered efforts of private individuals. The new colony takes away the produce of these countries, and gives, in return, augmented ability to all those regions for the

profitable importation of manufactures. The Irish establishments, by means of their close connexion with the new colony, employ, for example, the produce there raised—the rice, fish, opium, and other articles,—to pay for the tea, spices, and drugs, which they would bring home; and thus, from the advantages they possess in settling the colony, they can avail themselves of an entirely new and lucrative trade, assuming that some change will be introduced in East India commerce.

In case any peculiar regulations were interposed, to favor these establishments in Ireland, they would hardly be objected to; because there is no monopoly designed to be engrossed by a few, which should be open to many. Were we about to give a particular direction to a trade in existence, or just springing into existence, some objections might be urged; but, in the present case, every thing is created; the companies provide and send out the people, and undertake the charge of management, generating, in fact, a new possession yielding obedience to British dominion; and it is but fair and reasonable that they should, at least, reap the benefit of their own work, until it has repaid their outlay. According to these plans, emigration becomes more a matter of policy than necessity; because, independently of the immediate objects sought, we infuse a new spirit for foreign trade into the country, and give rise to many associate branches for distant enterprize, which could never, by any other means, be

called into existence. Emigration, proceeding upon this principle, need not be confined to the present moment, but may act permanently, and transform a cankerous evil into a diffusive benefit.

In respect to the funds required for the transportation of the emigrants, it appears desirable that a considerable quota should be defrayed by the state in the first instance. The proposal of permitting parishes to mortgage their rates appears inexpedient on many grounds. It is reviving what always must be considered bad in principle,—entailing injury on posterity for the benefit of the existing generation. It would also be a prolific source of abuse; and surely, on reflection, it must be manifest that the poor-rates are like any other description of tax, and ought to be identified with the public burdens of the country. If it be expedient to make a remote and not an immediate payment, the government ought to manage the matter more completely, satisfactorily, and economically, than a number of parishes, who could rarely act in concert, or with that unity of purpose necessary to the finished performance of any comprehensive design. A direct grant of a sum of money by the state, with the aid of a large navy to convey the settlers, appears the wisest mode to promote emigration. £500,000 in all probability would be the outside of the sum required, assuming it ungenerous to resort to indirect coercion by a withdrawal of the rates; and this sum might eventually be repaid in case the various settlements flourished. The

most eligible sites should be surveyed, and a general plan announced by government for different companies to send in proposals; the government undertaking to give the assistance of ships of war, and such pecuniary aid, in the first instance, as would be requisite to prepare the colonial lands, and create roads and public conveniencies. This assistance at the outset would secure the success of the undertaking, and diffuse energy and an avidity for settlement amongst the companies, at the same time prompting many capitalists to engage in the speculation. A colonial bank might be established to conduct all matters of finance, and to give accommodation of credit to the various settlers. So soon, indeed, as the plans presented a reasonable prospect of success, there would be no want of capital to invest in such undertakings, and in numberless other channels which are constantly opening in a flourishing colony.

The immediate patronage of government would strengthen the credit of these new settlements, and it is presumable that, under the existing prospects of the country, partiality or objectionable patronage would not be permitted to creep in. Large fleets of government vessels, in the various great ports of the kingdom, would create unusual excitement, and cause a rush for passages, which would enable the gratuitous emigration to be quickly disposed of. Last year there were between sixty and seventy thousand persons who emigrated to Canada, and all was conducted in a silent and imperceptible manner. Three hundred thousand persons, therefore, could be removed

with exceedingly little real difficulty. The food, for the immediate use of the settlers, could be supplied from Port Jackson or the East Indies, with a little preliminary arrangement; and indeed this primary step, formidable as it appears to the civilians, who have hitherto treated on this subject, falls immeasurably short of the difficulty which a general encounters in providing food for a large army in an extensive and protracted campaign.

Section II.

Cultivation of Waste Lands.

There are three descriptions of waste lands which are capable of cultivation, but under very different circumstances with regard to final results. The first consists of those lands situated in remote parts, which are capable of yielding permanently a profit, or some return over and above the immediate wages of labour employed in cultivation, in case a sale for the produce could be readily procured; but, from the backwardness of the country, or the poverty of the people, no suitable market presenting itself, private proprietors or speculators are not disposed to make any attempt at reclaiming the land, and therefore it lies waste. It is apparent that this state of things will in time correct itself; if the country generally be im-

proved, profit will ultimately appear; and there being thus a certainty of remuneration, there can be little risk in the government or the public defraying the outlay in the first instance, as tending both to hasten and to widen the natural industry.

The second class consists of those lands which might ultimately afford a profit, or a surplus beyond the outlay of immediate labour, provided a sum were expended, in the first instance, to put the land in condition. This primary outlay being in fact so much capital sunk, which never would be redeemed, no proprietor or farmer is of course disposed to reclaim land of this description.

The third class consists of land which permanently is incapable of yielding a surplus over and above the wages of labour actually employed in its cultivation.

When we seek to remove a redundant population, it is obvious that the different lands described present very diversified means for absorbing the labour, both as regards the permanent condition of the labourer himself and the state. In respect to the first, which is sure eventually to yield a profit, few objections can be made against an immediate commencement to bring the lands into a state of cultivation, and to establish a market for the sale of the produce, the want of which is the chief existing obstacle. In England and Scotland there is little land of this description, but a very large portion exists in Ireland. There can be no doubt, therefore, of the expediency of immediately reclaiming this land, and of undertaking it on an extended scale. An industrious neighbour-

hood would gradually grow up, presenting advantageous means of sale for the accessory produce, and yearly augmenting the value of the land. Some cavilling in the first instance might be heard in certain quarters respecting the expenditure; but it is presumed that an enlarged examination of the subject will occasion a change in opinion, and lessen the disposition to censure. In judging of the propriety of a large outlay in public works of any kind, it does not necessarily follow that the advantage, gain, or saving of time or money, should be immediate. Many of the public works in Ireland, where national funds have been liberally granted, and which periodically call forth indignant censure in parliament from the retail practitioners in national economy, will assuredly merit public commendation, so soon as a population arises, actively engaged in commerce, and capable of appreciating their advantages. At present, owing to the poverty and the absence or smallness of the traffic, the public works, canals, harbours, and such undertakings, seem disproportioned to the real wants of the country, and therefore predispose the mind to censure the original grant of money. But when internal traffic grows up, even to one-third of the extent shaped out, these works will be found all serviceable, and by no means disproportioned to the required exigencies in assisting the developement of industry. It need hardly be observed, that this commendation of extensive works in a young commercial country, with great intrinsic capabilities, though not properly unfolded, is irres-

pective of any consideration of jobs, improper appropriation of funds, or similar species of corruption. It is assumed that the paramount importance of the general object in view will, for the future at least, secure purity of intention in the design, and strict impartiality in its execution.

Agreeably to these considerations, if a considerable sum of money be required for bringing the waste lands of Ireland into cultivation, it should be freely defrayed by the state. Profits sooner or later will arise, when the internal condition of the country is improved, and this reclaiming of the land is in itself a useful auxiliary in accelerating improvement. There are many thousand acres that would yield upwards of twenty bushels of corn per acre; and if this be the case, a rent will eventually be yielded, no matter whether the existing corn laws are modified or not. In point of fact, we may safely, for the next entire generation, look to Ireland to supply our deficiencies of corn, in case our measures for her amelioration are judicious. It is apparent that a return of this kind, giving a great surplus to meet the cost of the conveniencies, luxuries, and embellishments of life, would be signally advantageous to the country at large. It would be no misdirection of labour, and indeed it would be difficult to point out any other branch in which so clear a gain or accession of wealth to the community could be derived. The low habitual rate of wages in Ireland, which, with all our efforts of improvement, will probably

continue for a considerable time, must occasion the surplus of production beyond ordinary outlay to be considerable; and even supposing that the Irish lands only produced twenty bushels of corn per acre, while Poland would yield forty or fifty, before political economists censure this comparative misdirection of labour, they should recollect that the facility of extending agriculture amongst the Irish labourers is greater than that of introducing manufactures, particularly those designed for foreign interchange. By cultivating the land, and producing even a less quantity of corn than that assumed, a clear positive gain is realized by the community. Were this denied, under the principle that we should purchase corn wherever it can be obtained cheapest, it is most probable that, in place of possessing a corresponding production at home to effect the interchange, there would be nothing to offer, because the Irish labourers possess no immediate or suitable employment to which they could direct their attention. In addition to ordinary agricultural produce, many of the uncultivated lands are peculiarly suited to the growth of hemp and flax; and it is certainly reasonable to presume, from the many natural advantages, that a great branch of agriculture could permanently flourish here, powerfully promoting the collective interests of the empire. The time may yet come when large districts will be cultivated in this manner, exhibiting a flourishing town rising in the midst, and working up in manufacture the materials grown in the neigh-

bourhood; while on the western coast a large naval station may be formed, consuming these native manufactures, and economically adapted, from its position, to be the place for naval armaments and refittings for North and South America.

The mode of accomplishing the cultivation of these waste lands would appear to be best manageable by government. It would be wise to set about the task on an extensive scale, and, after the object had been fairly accomplished, it would be easy to get rid of the land to private proprietors, in a manner best calculated to promote the internal interests of the country. Engineers should examine the land, with a view of executing the whole of the plan upon a scientific scale, where arrangements can be made saving time and expense, and giving a greater degree of unity and completeness to the undertaking. It is reasonable to conclude, that a large number of the inhabitants would eventually be located on these lands, and also some outlet would be afforded to English agricultural labourers to settle in those parts. The mixture of the people would be productive of great advantage; improved notions of husbandry, and the ploughman's skill, for which the English are distinguished, would be introduced, effecting serviceable changes in the habits and callings of the Irish labourers.

The second description of land presents a wide opening for employing the redundant population, but in a different form. These lands, where an outlay is

required in the first instance, but which after that outlay fairly sunk would yield some surplus to a capitalist, assuming the price of wheat to range from fifty-five to sixty shillings, exist in all parts of the kingdom. It is acknowledged that this outlay, in the first instance, or at least a very great portion of it, would be a total loss; because the surplus ultimately derived would not be sufficiently extensive to redeem the capital and interest primarily expended. This circumstance at first view would seem fatal, on sound and economical grounds, to the cultivation of these lands: a useless expenditure of money seems to be irredeemably sunk for ever. But this is by no means an accurate view of the case. Let us consider what is the nature of this outlay, or this sinking of capital, which seems at the outset the fatal objection. It is nothing more than the wages of labour, which are defrayed in turning up the land and putting it in condition. The mere materials used, or the manure, is a small portion compared to this labour. Now it is material to reflect, that in all reasoning on this subject the wages of this labour are calculated, and are assumed to be positively paid. But this is not exactly correct: the object is to get rid of labourers who are now redundant, who consequently cost for their subsistence a definite sum: if therefore these labourers, who at all events must be fed, be located on any land which eventually will enable them to support themselves, it is not correct to make a single charge for labour of any kind, in putting the land in

condition to attain that desirable end. A definite sum would require to be paid in poor-rates; that payment simply continues, under the location proposed, for a given period; but the difference between the two cases is, that if nothing be done the payment will be perpetual, while, if these lands be appropriated, the payment is temporary and only for that brief period requisite to bring the land into a state of regular productiveness. Suppose, for example, that an offer were made to a farmer, or experienced cultivator, by any parish, stating, here are a number of labourers at your disposal for three years, without any charge to you whatever; we, the parishioners, keep these labourers out of our poor-rates for the term stated but no longer; at the end of that time, you are to conduct the cultivation of the reclaimed land in the ordinary manner, giving reasonable engagements for the fulfilment of your contract: it certainly cannot be doubted that the cultivator, to whom such an offer was made, would promptly agree; and at the expiration of the prescribed period, his land, from his cheap mode of putting it in condition, would be capable of continuous and profitable cultivation. In this case how does the matter stand: the redundancy is eventually removed, at the cost of the continuance of the rates for three years; after the lapse of that time additional employment, through natural means, is presented to the labourer, the rate-payers are relieved from their tax, and the capabilities of the state are extended.

The most judicious mode of carrying an arrangement of this kind into effect would be for a number of districts, in which lands of this description were situated, to coalesce and to seek out the most intelligent, enterprising, skilful, and trustworthy persons to act as farmers, who should take charge of the pauper labourers; entering into a regular contract for three, five, or seven years, according to the time it would take to bring the land into a state of fair and permanent productiveness. The wages of these paupers would be paid as usual out of the parish rates; but the districts, or the persons who manage the business on behalf of the rate-payers, should place the controlling power, in respect to discipline and regulations, in the hands of the farmer. According to the most authentic information, abundance of persons could be found, willing to undertake agreements of this nature; and it might be a matter of local arrangement to determine the number of years in which rates should continue, and the labour be gratuitous to the new cultivator. In many cases, if a considerable time were given, the land would be so improved, that a permanent rent would be yielded; and suitable arrangements should be made, to give the rate-payers the benefit of this change when the agreement was expired.

It thus appears, that if a little patience be manifested, the difficulty of getting rid of redundant population, even under very discouraging circumstances, is not insuperable. By allowing the sum now given

to paupers to accumulate, as it were, in a certain direction, it establishes a degree of perennial productiveness, which encounters little risk of being abandoned, unless too great haste or precipitation is manifested in stopping the gratuitous labour before the land is properly in heart. It would be difficult to ascertain the entire quantity of land of this class throughout the United Kingdom, but there can be no doubt that it is very considerable; and, consequently, a large portion of the agricultural population in the southern and eastern counties could be immediately disposed of in this manner.

The third description of land, or that incurably sterile, possessed of no substrata, or materials for labour to effect a great change, and which thus can never hope to yield a surplus beyond the bare and absolute support of the labourer who tills it, is easily disposed of. This, waiving what is done in the way of ornament, or supplying means and opportunity for recreation, ought not to be touched for purposes of production. We have no objection to see cricket-grounds, race-courses, or large open spaces, for the enjoyment of the people, but it would be inexpedient in the extreme to force, in the present commercial intercourse of the world, the cultivation of these lands.

Whenever land possesses such little capability that there is not room for a capitalist to derive, immediately or prospectively, any profit or support for a superior order of society, exclusive of sustaining his labourers, it is not difficult to decide, that it is a misdirection

of industry to cultivate it, and that the social organization of that country is defective. All those plans, therefore, relative to poor colonies, which seem now in fashion, where paupers go to shape out subsistence for themselves, unrestrained in respect to their future increase, and raising no surplus beyond their scanty subsistence, even assuming that that subsistence is intrinsically procurable, is worse than nugatory; it is positively pernicious. It is calculated to add to the permanent poverty, without any ulterior or redeeming vent by which that poverty could be cured. It is adding to population, in its worst form; that form of resourceless manual labour which, of all others, is the most difficult to check, or to correct. It is needless to dwell on this subject, since the whole principles of this work are in direct opposition to it. To lessen the relative number of labourers, and of the lower classes generally, is the sole object we have undertaken, and how do we purpose to accomplish this? Not by any peculiar restriction upon the lower classes, but by seeking to make as many of them master producers as possible. If we do not seek to make labourers gentlemen, we at least give them an opportunity to cultivate their minds, and to move in a different sphere to what is now too frequently associated in the thoughts as the permanent condition of the working classes. But what would poor colonies do? They would multiply labourers out of all proportion to the employers; if there are now fifty to one of the superior class, ere long there would be a hundred; indeed, before two generations had

elapsed, the exact counterpart of our endeavours would be achieved, and the competition amongst those living by service, superior as well as inferior, would be such, that many gentlemen would be reduced to the condition of paupers.

Section III.

Fisheries.

When it is considered that Great Britain is a maritime nation, possessing abundant materials for the establishment of extensive fisheries, containing within her own territory means of certain consumption, and securing by her colonies in the West Indies a constant export, giving permanence and stability to the trade, it cannot but excite great surprise that so small a portion of her population should be employed in this valuable branch of industry. An immense outlet is here presented for the employment of the population, and a large portion of the existing redundancy may thus be removed. The northern seas afford an inexhaustible supply of herrings, and not only these seas, but their numerous inlets, creeks, and bays, swarm with this prolific fish. There are, besides, mines of salt, equally inexhaustible, presenting the means to cure the fish with advantage, and to ex-

port it to foreign nations. A resource of this kind is intrinsically more valuable than the most productive mine of gold or silver; it yields perennial returns superior to the most fertile land, without the expense of seed, or manure, or exhausting processes; and it not only pours into the lap of the country a supply of wealth greater than would result from the accession of new and virgin territory, but it adds to the strength and power of the state. Similar in principle to some of the preceding remedies proposed, it operates in a double capacity in removing existing redundancy. It gets rid of superfluous hands, removing heavy burdens from others, and it brings a clear addition to the national income. It is prolifically serviceable, also, in creating a number of collateral trades, that must be established to supply requisite implements and materials, whenever it is prosecuted to any considerable extent. There are all the persons employed in building the ships and boats, in manufacturing the tackle, in making nets, in conveying the salt to the place of curing, together with numberless such occupations; and, indeed, it appears, by an estimate published by the States General of Holland, in 1669, that the number of persons engaged in these collateral trades, all in comfortable circumstances, was greater than that of the hardy seamen directly employed in fishing. The necessity for the establishment of these collateral trades excites the chief hope that, under a judicious system of encouragement, many thousands of persons, now paupers,

or in extreme indigence, may be converted into active producers, exceedingly serviceable to the collective interests of commerce. Scotland and her Western Isles seem the most eligible sites for this national experiment. The supply is pronounced to be virtually inexhaustible; and, indeed, the advantages are so manifold and striking, that surprise is frequently expressed, that the efforts hitherto used should seem to be comparatively unsuccessful; and that foreign nations, the Dutch, and the Danes, should rob this country of so large a portion of its legitimate trade. But a few remarks will explain the causes of past failure. It may seem a curious assertion that, surrounded as we are by a redundant population, if the question be viewed nationally or collectively, the obstacles against the correction of indigence, in any one quarter, should proceed from scantiness of people; but such is virtually the case, in respect to the northern fisheries. The dispersion of inhabitants over a wide tract of country is unfavourable to the establishment of markets, or to easy and constant communication by roads. There is no great assemblage of trades and occupations in towns, not only to supply the requisite materials for fishing promptly and economically, but to afford a regular and steady market for the sale of the fish, where a few capitalists would reside, disposed to enter into speculations, and to export large quantities to distant parts, whenever an unusual season of prosperity rewarded the efforts of the fishermen. Much time is lost in unsettled and desultory occupa-

tions; the families of the fishermen are in a state of constant migration; they travel from bay to bay, depending on precarious support; and, unless remedies are devised for this backward mode of traffic, and to obviate all the difficulties inseparable from the dispersed situation of the inhabitants, it is not probable that the fisheries will ever extensively flourish, or advantageously compete with foreign countries. Very different is the case in Holland; there every thing is concentrated; and business is conducted in that steady and permanent manner, with all the divisions of labour, which are so necessary to ultimate success. A vessel no sooner arrives than her cargo is discharged; the crew think not of the sale, it belongs to other branches of occupation; and they put again to sea immediately, seeking to obtain a fresh supply of fish.

Another cause of the backward state of our fisheries proceeds from the want of proper training, or instruction of the fishermen, in its most approved forms. We generally treat of the trade of a fisherman as if it were as easily learned as ordinary descriptions of manual labour; but, in reality, it requires a long apprenticeship under the best masters. The fatigues and hardships are great, and can only be encountered after a youth is early inured, under suitable instruction, to the dangers of this peculiar service. From time immemorial, the Dutch have been celebrated for their skill, originally fostered by the peculiar circumstances under which they were placed. These two circumstances, therefore—the want of high skill, and

suitable markets—have to be corrected, before we can expect to see the Scotch fisheries flourish on a great scale. To secure the men is the first object; and the most judicious mode of accomplishing this would seem to be, not to give rewards amongst our own fishermen, but to send to Holland, and other parts, and engage the most skilful fishermen to come over and settle in the Western Isles of Scotland, holding out to them liberal inducements, and causing them to take under their charge numerous apprentices, who in turn would serve as the materials for rearing others, and thus originate a large marine community. The necessity which these seamen would create for the settlement of numerous dependent trades, must act directly in reducing the redundancy of unemployed hands. A large mart would soon be established to secure the perfect developement of these plans, and providing also the means of a constant and regular trade. Were there a city of 100,000 inhabitants in the heart of the fisheries, devoted to the one predominant object, every one acquainted with his calling, no loitering or dallying with circumstances, but all proceeding in a prompt business-like manner, there would be little apprehension of this great source of emolument failing, or being hereafter placed in jeopardy. Not only the British colonies, Cuba, the Brazils, and South America generally, might be supplied from this quarter, adding several millions annually to the national income; but, from the facility of land conveyance at home daily extending, the very centre of the country might exhibit abundant markets of esculent fish.

From the great concentration of means, calicoes, for example, are produced at Manchester at four pence per yard: let this mighty mart of manufacturing energy be reduced to one-fourth of its present size, diminishing the capabilities for a high division of labour, and the price, in all probability, would be sixpence. It would be the same, analogically, with the fisheries. From the scattered and detached manner in which the trade is now conducted, and the want of a proper division of labour, the price of herrings is thirty shillings per barrel: let a concentration of effort, similar in maritime pursuits to what Manchester exhibits in regard to manufactures, be supplied, and the price would probably fall to twenty shillings. We may safely, therefore, undertake to locate crowds in those places, certain that the larger the scale on which we operate, the greater is the certainty of ultimate success. The land in those parts presents great facilities for the cultivation of the potatoe, and the immediate means of support are thus provided. There is intrinsically no danger of starvation, or of the settlers running the risk of extreme destitution, whenever these two sources of food, the herring and the potatoe, are conjoined in suitable abundance; and long before exhaustion is talked of, or even before the full capabilities of the settlement are developed, the maritime predilections of the people, as in Holland, will have generated other branches of trade. We need not, at any time, fear the prolific powers of the potatoe in extending redundancy, provided there be proper superintending control. But in the case of the new fisheries,

the more local population increases, the more surely will redundancy disappear. Let it be recollected, that the inhabitants in this quarter scarcely amount to forty to the square mile, while the intrinsic capabilities of the country, from the inexhaustible supply of fish, and the ease with which potatoes may be raised, would support at the very least two hundred. There is thus an opportunity presented for several doublings before privations can appear, assuming that the relations of society remain unchanged.

The most judicious means of carrying this plan into effect would seem to be, to establish a public company, with a restriction of an annual dividend upon their capital, who would undertake to procure the most skilful fishermen from distant parts, to hold out inducements for the indenturing of numerous apprentices, to provide settlements in land for a great number of labourers immediately to cultivate, and to encourage the various collateral branches of business required for the successful prosecution of the fisheries. It would be easy at present to procure large districts of land on moderate terms, and if our reasoning be sound, that there is no fear of future redundancy, the people might be allowed freely to cultivate this land, depending partly on it, and partly on their richer domain, the sea, for their support.

Were the government to aid this plan, and to cause it to be conducted on a very extensive scale, venturing upon a gratuity of fifty or a hundred thousand pounds, the money could never be better bestowed, notwith-

standing the authority of Dr. Adam Smith himself might be quoted in opposition. But it is difficult to guess what the sentiments of that distinguished economist would have been, in case he had been required to get rid of a redundancy of a million of people.

Section IV.

Formation of Corps for Public Purposes at home or abroad.

The diversified means of employment in public works, which Great Britain affords, whether for state purposes or general utility, are remarkably great. Besides her agricultural colonies, she possesses many distant settlements, in which labour is of difficult attainment, and where public works could be conducted with great advantage to general commerce. In many of those parts the maintenance of order is an important object, and where civilization has not made extended progress, an imposing display of authority is not unserviceable. It does much more than compensate for the expense, although it is but equitable that that expense should originate in the settlement itself.

It is instructive occasionally to trace the progress of civilization in barbarous regions. It is generally achieved by conquest, or by the strong force pos-

sessed by the dominant party, which prevents ideas of resistance from ever entering the thoughts of the subjugated race, until by degrees some slight amalgamation takes place, and the arbitrary rule is softened. In Africa, if we hope to make any progress in civilizing the inhabitants, we must maintain a considerable force, not destined exactly for purposes of conquest, but for the suppression of barbarous violence. It would seem, therefore, expedient to revive what formerly was contemplated, and to form a number of juvenile corps, for settlement in the most healthy and advantageous sites on the African coast. Our considerable towns would thus be drained of a large portion of their youthful population, who now are brought up to every species of delinquency and crime. By taking these youths, at a period of life before the character is fully formed, there would be hopes of their moral amendment under judicious treatment, a circumstance in itself of great importance; and, at the same time, their constitutions would be better adapted to a tropical climate. By stationing these at the most convenient places on the coast of Africa, a useful commerce might be established. The comparative density of population in Africa, when once the seeds of civilization are sown, and a taste diffuses itself for articles of dress, presents extended means for taking off a large portion of manufactures, which in the existing relations of commerce should not be despised. Efficacious means also would be presented, in consequence of the internal order established

on the continent of Africa itself, to suppress the slave trade much more effectually than by the expensive system of mixed commissions and cruisers. By degrees a considerable export would arise from Africa, to pay for her consumption of manufactures; indeed, even now, our importation of wood and palm oil is considerable. It is conceived that on those articles an export duty could be levied, for defraying the expenses of the corps, without materially enhancing their cost, because of the greater facility presented to their production, consequent on the establishment of internal order. No expense whatever would thus be imposed upon this country; and, in respect to the immediate object of correcting the existing redundancy of population, though the absolute number of persons removed is not large, yet, as it takes place amongst the rising population in towns, it would considerably assist other youths in advantageously settling themselves in life.

There is another description of public corps which could be formed in this country, following the example of some of the continental states. A large body of labourers could be permanently attached to the engineer department, for civil as well as military or maritime purposes. It would not be easy to exhaust the advantageous works that could be carried into execution by these means, while, notwithstanding the expenditure, after their execution the resources of the country would be increased and not diminished. It is a great mistake to imagine an outlay of this kind as

unproductive, or as corresponding to the ordinary pay of sailors or soldiers. The national concerns are analogous in principle to those of private manufacturers; and sometimes a manufacturer will expend a very large sum for the purpose of extending his premises, making his buildings and works more complete, in order that he may save time, trouble, and temporary expedients, in conducting his business. It is the same with a nation; aggregate production might be powerfully increased by well directed means to avoid inconvenience and trouble in many important points, indirectly at least, if not directly bearing upon public industry. In a commercial nation time is money, and an ingenious calculator considered the loss of time in London, from stoppages and other causes, as equivalent to more than £20,000 a day, thus inflicting a corresponding and positive loss upon aggregate production. On this principle, millions annually could be defrayed in public works in all parts of the kingdom, and the nation, after the expenditure, would be intrinsically richer than before, that is, the power of reproduction—indeed not the power alone, but the thing itself—would be increased.

It is designed to have the labourers to perform these works embodied into regular corps; because there is reason to believe that the work in such cases would be more efficiently executed, and because the population so provided for would be effectually removed from ordinary occupations without again returning to depress the wages of labour, after a local service had been performed.

All these means of diversified employment, simultaneously carried into effect, would be quite adequate to the getting rid of the existing redundancy of population. For the final time we would remind the reader, that redundancy means merely labourers who cannot at the moment be profitably employed, and that every attempt upon an extended scale to throw the expenditure, which the maintenance of these people costs, into another channel, acts with accelerated efficacy upon the private affairs of life. The very act of changing the direction in which subsistence is obtained gives rise to a new description of gain in some other branch, and thus an ameliorative influence diffused over a few hundred thousand people may be sufficient to restore the entire nation to unprecedented prosperity.

Section V.

Order of Adoption of the Different Measures proposed.

In all plans of improvement it is very important to begin at the right end, and to establish a strict dependence between the various parts, so as to yield reciprocal support and assistance. The prior operation of certain measures facilitates the introduction of others, and prepares the way for a smooth, natural,

and harmonious accomplishment of the great design, up to the most minute decorative auxiliary; which, had a wrong order been observed, might have occasioned much vexatious obstruction. Emigration is the first measure to be carried into effect; and though there is no desire to expatriate great numbers of the people against their deliberate will, yet, viewing the entire bearing of this great question, the purest and most comprehensive humanity is not violated, when we venture to hint that emigration will be carried into effect more advantageously now, when considerable distress prevails, than some time hence, when material improvement may be effected in the body of the people. Were other plans first resorted to, the labourers probably might be loth to leave their country; and thus, from a wrong arrangement, ulterior designs commendable in themselves would be exceedingly thwarted, if not entirely frustrated. Emigration is the means of getting rid of the largest portion of the redundancy; and, from its combining assistance in extending employment, it holds out the greatest hopes of a speedy change, to effectuate subsidiary measures of pauper location. There is, in reality, no difficulty in getting rid of any desired number by these means, provided the legislature be decisive and determined; and not a month should be lost to prepare the way for a very extensive emigration this first season. The larger the number, as before explained, the more agreeable it will be to the emigrants themselves.

The next measure is to survey the waste lands, designated as the second class, in Great Britain, and promptly to fix the paupers upon them in the manner detailed, in order to give the new occupant, now, that the rates are pretty high, a favourable opportunity to negociate an advantageous bargain ; since it is desirable that he should have gratuitous labour as long as possible, to insure, by liberal outlay, the permanent productiveness of the land.

Having thus used the very circumstance of the high poor rates as the means of making favourable arrangements for the new designs, the great measure for the cultivation of the lands in Ireland could be beneficially introduced. A great change would immediately be effected in the condition of that country, diminishing the emigration of labourers into Great Britain.

Then might follow the measures relative to the fisheries, and the formation of the public corps. By this time it is presumable wages of labour would have advanced, and the mass of the population in Ireland would be in a different condition, and disposed to consume a greater quantity of commodities and manufactures of every description. At this auspicious juncture should be formed the manufacturing towns, employing in their formation great numbers of artisans and labourers, and thus supplying inherent materials for their own growth and progressive prosperity.

If thus is removed the whole of the redundancy,

a glowing prospect will open in the distance, presenting to the entire people the means for a new race, with young blood, as it were, renovated and regenerated from preceding infirmities. Then may we step in, like watchful and anxious attendants, with our new plan of poor laws, and all those regulations designed to promote, when the character is suitably prepared, the high civilisation of the people. There is no hurry for the introduction of these measures; if they are judicious there can be little doubt of their final success, and it would be better to delay their adoption, than to endanger their success by too great precipitation. The difference of to-day and to-morrow is not very material in philosophical legislation; and if, through indiscriminate zeal, a trial were made, which, owing to the diseased state of the labourers' feelings, did not fulfil the ends designed, it might throw discredit on the entire plans. But there can be no objection to make an experiment in certain parts, where the tone of feeling is healthy, in order to judge of the correctness of the principles laid down, and to acquire practical information for subsequent regulations.

CHAPTER XII.

PROSPECTS OF SOCIETY.

After all our measures designed for the labouring classes, the removal of distress in every well regulated society must greatly depend upon the spontaneous kindness and good feeling of the affluent. It is really quite lamentable at times to listen to conversations respecting benevolence and charity, in which, owing to diseased notions of the principles of population, persons are forbidden to perform acts of kindness, for fear they may increase at a future day the sum of suffering. The scion of a noble house, fresh from the study of political treatises, is occasionally heard reproving his sisters, who have rashly yielded to a feminine softness of disposition, in assuaging the distresses of the unfortunate whom they may have encountered in their morning walks. This political speculation on final consequences, to the neglect of immediate duties, is most unnatural, if not unamiable; it steels heart against the every commendable emotion; and it is beyond comparison the most objectionable consequence that has resulted from the prevailing theory of population. In case that theory

were exploded in the relations of private life, more real benefit would result to society from the resumption of practical benevolence in all its forms, than from the public measures enacted by the state. To unite all classes of persons in bonds of harmony and union must secure propitious results; and how many works and private undertakings could be promoted by the nobility and gentry for the advantage of the lower classes, in case they were not frightened by some spectre of future starvation and over peopling, which haunts their thoughts. No interest should consider itself detached and unconnected by sympathy with the bulk of the people; and in vain will the lower classes strive to emerge from their degradation unless mutual kindness of feeling be elicited. The tone of public opinion, and the future prospects of the country, must depend upon the higher and middle ranks of society. It is here we must look for high enterprise, and for those discoveries which, appearing at the extreme end in the line of advancement, serve as guides for general imitation. Perhaps these classes may conceive that they themselves are depressed by severe privations; and, indubitably, a number of public measures are required to permit the expanding faculties of the various aspirants to wealth, distinction, and fame, to display themselves in the most advantageous manner. The adoption of an equitable and comprehensive plan of taxation, the alteration and remodelling of our codes of jurisprudence, and the establishment of the currency upon a

secure and permanent basis, to give every facility to credit where assistance is commendable, and to check speculation when extravagant and dangerous, are amongst the most prominent measures which the exigencies of the country demand. Were these adjusted in a comprehensive manner, suited to the spirit of the age, an extraordinary change would soon manifest itself in commerce, and in the political eminence of the nation. Difficult as those subjects undoubtedly are, they are not so incapable of definite management as the poor laws of which we have undertaken to treat; and it will be found that their satisfactory adjustment will be greatly facilitated by the introduction and adoption of primary measures for the amelioration of the great body of the people.

It is interesting to trace, in past history, the vast strides which mankind have taken, and the various inventions that have quickened civilization, when a sudden flow of prosperity has burst upon the people, and when the national mind, like a giant refreshed, has started from a temporary torpor, in an ardent pursuit of new deeds of fame. The great improvements which took place in the practical arts, in the early part of the present century, when commerce was exceedingly brisk, have had a striking effect upon elementary science; and this theoretical invigoration again in time causes reaction, and suggests new views and relations in practice, presenting a vast field for the further operations of ingenious men. Discoveries quite as great as the spinning jenny and the steam-

engine may reasonably be anticipated, so soon as society is enabled to present the prospect of suitable reward to the inventor; and numberless confederate undertakings will spring up, effecting an entire change in social accommodation and the power to partake of the conveniences and enjoyments of life. The acceleration of these discoveries, theoretical as well as practical, all of which are within the limits of the human faculties, does truly depend upon the diffusion of worldly prosperity. Who can predict the effects on literature, when ten or twenty thousand copies will be the ordinary edition of a scientific work, in place of seven hundred and fifty or one thousand, as is the case at present. Thousands of persons may then follow literature for its own sake, every where extending the fruits of knowledge, and by the combined volume of mind accomplishing, within a few years, mighty objects, which, under duller and less encouraging circumstances, might have taken centuries to bring to maturity.

But after every attempt to elevate the commercial glory of England, we should deem her prospects, with all their richness, gross and unsightly in the extreme, unless they were chastened and animated by a proper moral principle. Human happiness should always be the end of political schemes; commerce, finance, jurisprudence, and every point connected with political economy, should only be viewed as means to subserve to the one ultimate design. To improve the pecuniary circumstances of all classes of

the people is, undoubtedly, the primary stage; but a great statesman would have higher and nobler views. He would strive to banish the desponding care from our passengers in the streets, only that they might participate in rational and moral enjoyment; he would seek to cause the bosom of the artisan to throb with ardour in endeavours to uphold his country's institutions; and in recreative excursions after the toils and cares of business, he would wish the farmer's labourer to greet the eye, here and there issuing, with cheerful step, from a neat habitation, surrounded with its flower-garden, and blending, in chaste simplicity, with the ripening fields from whence our sustenance is drawn. The realization of this picture should never be despaired of; and it is even doubtful if the moral defects, which now appear in obstruction, are so difficult to correct as would cursorily be supposed.

On reviewing the history of the past, manners and national character seem in constant change; sometimes they advance, sometimes recede, from that ideal standard of excellence which we love to picture to our thoughts; and it is exceedingly difficult, from predilections, present impressions, and past associations, to judge whether or not the moral character of a nation is advancing, stationary, or declining. We gain frequently in one respect, lose in another; and, upon the whole, it may be affirmed, that English society, within the last generation, has received some improvement to compensate for the growth of opposing evils.

If we analyze the changes that, from time to time, are introduced in opinions and national character, we shall find that some descend from the higher classes, some ascend from the lower. All opinions founded upon matters relating to pecuniary service of every kind, trades, and common occupations, ascend from the lower classes to the higher. The prevailing sentiments, therefore, in respect to common honesty, correctness in dealing, and those grosser affairs of life which relate to business, subsistence, and all branches belonging to this department of pecuniary service, take their tinge from the practices of the body of the people with whom dealings of this kind principally originate.

On the other hand, all matters concerning external religion, practical morals, manners, fashions, the courtesies of life, and sentiments respecting the agreeable intercourse and usages of society, originate with the higher classes.

In the mean between the two the intellectual character of the age is determined, also the morality of the schools, if not the morality of the world; and here, consequently, originate the discoveries in literature, in science and art, both ascending and descending in their effects.

On referring to the first of those changes in predominant notions or opinions that originate with the mass of the people, it is to be feared there is material deterioration within the last generation. There is in

every direction a distrust of tradespeople, in respect to their disposition to deceive and overreach, and frequently this disagreeable estimate of character is but too well founded. Complaints are constantly heard in family circles of the alteration in the honesty of shopkeepers within a period comparatively short; of their readiness to take advantage of inexperience or credulous ignorance; of the intrinsic inferiority of their wares compared with their warranty; and difficulty is alleged to be experienced in finding respectable shops, where implicit reliance can be placed on the statements of the vendor in regard to purchases, when there is no opportunity for personal scrutiny and examination. On the part of working tradespeople the deterioration is probably worse. If a mechanic be called in to perform the smallest job or service, he is sure to procrastinate its performance three times longer than is required. A species of smooth deceit prevails generally amongst this class whenever their services are required; and this incipient dishonesty mostly passes for cleverness amongst their own fellows, causing further deterioration of character. This disposition exercises deplorable consequences upon many important relations of society; it occasions these people to be distrusted by all who employ them; it destroys sympathy; induces an unfavourable opinion to be formed of human nature; causes persons in all spheres of life to view their fellow man as disposed to take advantage; and

the suspicion of others too frequently reacts and attaches moral delinquency to the censuring parties themselves.

These are melancholy evils, and deeply is that state of society to be deplored where such moral degradation has made any considerable progress, and where national manners in the aggregate are imbued with a disposition to worldly cunning and deceit. But on examination it will be found that this action on opinions and national character originates from the state of commercial prosperity, and the rewards which are given for services of all kinds. Whenever there is the disproportion, for example, of three candidates for the performance of one service, we may rest assured that some of the bad feelings of human nature will be conspicuously displayed. Men in affluent or comfortable circumstances are naturally indolent; they do not use much discrimination, or closely investigate the moral characters of those soliciting employment. Hence those tradespeople who resort to deceit are most likely to attain their ends, and persons of property must not complain, certainly they should not be surprised, when, after the lapse of a certain time, they discover that the whole tone of manners of the working classes is vitiated, by the absence of veracity in every transaction of business. For these evils there is no cure but the one—improvement in commercial prosperity. These are strictly worldly affairs, and any hope to cure them, by didactic harangues from the moral chair or the pulpit, indicates

extreme weakness, and merits the designation of that term, generally attached, in public life, to a speaker when his matter is neither very original nor entertaining. The means of cure consist in removing the temptation to dissimulation, by creating a higher reward for services of all kinds. Intrinsically, therefore, the difficulty is not so disheartening, and, since we have endeavoured to set forth the remedies, we shall be the more readily pardoned by the majority of these classes themselves, for speaking plainly in respect to their moral deterioration forced on them by uncontrollable circumstances.

As to those changes in opinions, manners, and national sentiments, which descend from the higher classes, they are more intractable in management, in case severe correction was requisite; but it is really difficult to discover any absolute deterioration which has ensued within the last generation. The principle of honour is quite as strong, conjugal fidelity does not seem weakened, gaming is rather declined, the grosser vices are quite exploded, and, it is questionable, if a decent regard for religion has at all decreased, notwithstanding the loud censure, which zealots frequently indulge, in respect to the infidelity and immorality of the age. There is certainly much superior refinement; and if there be not distinguished mental cultivation amongst the nobility and higher gentry themselves, there is at least superior homage granted to talent and intellectual endowments. Even the most disagreeable, if not the most censurable, feature

of English manners, the unsocial pride, the sullen reserve, and want of dignified courtesy, compared with the polished classes of other nations, does not originate with the higher classes, or the real aristocracy of the country. It is a curious circumstance, that this repulsive manner, which frequently excites the smile, not only of the philosopher, but of the accomplished man of the world, is a natural characteristic of all societies in which there are sudden rises from comparative obscurity to station and affluence. A successful debutant from the lower stages of life, on reaching eminence, finds himself for a time ill at ease; he is shy in his manner; he is apprehensive of being slighted in his new sphere; and he adopts a formal stiffness, as the only means known to him of exhibiting his sense of importance. The contact with such persons, on the part of the hereditary aristocracy, gives an injurious tinge to their own manners in return; their advances are probably not received with suitable courtesy; and, in their own defence, they are constrained to adopt similar reserve, which, perhaps, would never have been assumed, had the prosperity of the country been less, or had society been less chequered with great changes, by the creation of new families and hereditary honours.

This tone of society, though not apparently inflicting much serious injury upon the community, yet certainly militates greatly against the agreeableness of life, and prevents that general flow of sympathy which is indispensable to genuine happiness. It, and all

vices originating from the higher classes as the fountain source in determining much of the national character, and which, after every palliation, we must still admit to be numerous, can only be corrected by improved education; not merely the education of the schools, but the education of the world; the education, in short, which influences the conduct of young men of condition, after the performance of their university task, when they commence their morning ride or other recreation, and fashion their manners, opinions, and sentiments, according to the external circumstances by which they are surrounded. We may, indeed, pronounce that a mighty defect exists somewhere, when the education within college walls, in regard to the notions and principles imbibed, is pointedly different from the education without, when the free spontaneous notions and sentiments of the man of the world are exhibited. Universities cannot, it is said, form morals, principles, or character in general, because these are learned in the peculiar class or circle of society in which a student moves. He acquires from this circle the prevalent sentiments of the times, in thought and in action, by assimilation and contagion. But though real notions of life are thus learned in a different school, still proper training may create a greater tendency in the mind for the reception of commendable opinions, and sound principles, determining the general character; and when the finishing seminaries of education fail in performing this service, they foster dissimulation, and a disposition to view

ethical precepts with indifference. All our universities are now in this predicament; imperfect means, it must be admitted, are employed to form general character; and, probably, of the various sequences of thought which influence human action in mature life, not one in ten is traceable to that species of instruction which ought to be acquired at college in early life, when the mind is susceptible and ardent. In respect to principles and opinions, all is matter of chance, and depends entirely on the tone of society with which the student has mingled. A completely new æra, therefore, in education is not uncalled for at the present time, not only to give an impetus to literature, but to establish an amended system for the formation of character, which, difficult as the process may seem, is not utterly unattainable. With a view of facilitating the introduction of this seminal amelioration, it would be expedient to create new universities, upon a scale adapted to the condition of the age; which will not only teach the ordinary precepts of learning, and train the intellectual faculties to a high exercise of their powers, but which will establish a foundation for the growth of sound morals, generous principles of honour, and those thousand qualities of the mind which give man an elevated place in the opinions of his fellows, securing good understanding and steady reliance in many important affairs of life, but which can never be embodied, in a code of jurisprudence, or in the precepts of religion. Let universities be established at York, Winchester, or any suitable

place in the South of England, and at Belfast, in Ireland, upon a large scale, empowered to grant degrees and collegiate honours of all kinds; standing out in advance of the age, in regard to their mode of tuition, course, and objects of learning; conveying a new impress upon the current of thought; and infusing fresh vigour into the seminaries of learning at present established. The beneficial consequences resulting to society, from this comprehensive proceeding would be immeasurably greater than what attaches merely to the persons instructed. The most powerful minds of the age, who stand in the van of knowledge, would be braced by the competition; and the important works which must necessarily appear, by various candidates for professorships, and similar situations, would prodigiously increase the knowledge and mental attainments of the present and succeeding generation. The more minds which can be placed at the furthest point of intellectual eminence, of course the greater probability is there of a second Bacon or Newton arising, to achieve at one bound the unlocking of fresh treasures which nature has in store; and it is difficult even for the imagination to picture the ulterior results upon society, if an emulative spirit in the pursuit of fame displayed itself in various parts, restoring to the British Isles their pristine glories in science.

When these effects upon society have operated, then possibly may we be able to compass, and not one instant before, that highest and most difficult part of

human accomplishment, the creation of a form of civil government, giving equal protection and security to all classes of the people; freely tolerating in spirit as well as in act every diversity of opinion, those seemingly arbitrary, and those seemingly liberal; and containing within itself a code of laws adequate to the conservation of justice, order, private and public rights, security of property, and protection against oppression in all its forms, against the stones of a mob, the shafts of concealed slanderers or assassins, as well as the sabres of soldiers. Mankind is not by any means sufficiently advanced for the attainment of this high species of government. Many experiments must yet be made, and many blunders be committed, in an intermediate state of probation, which we denominated the second stage of political knowledge. Patience, as we then observed, alone is required; for sooner or later, unless some portentous calamity afflict the human race, the means of attaining this end, if not discovered in perfection, will be at least immeasurably improved.

In the mean time, may we venture to bestow one general counsel to all nations, respecting the surest mode of quickening the discovery itself, and of eliciting its full advantages. Let the relations of the social system be fostered in their utmost purity, let the domestic government of families be conducted in the wisest, most regular, and beneficent manner. This subsidiary discipline and control is indispensable to the perfect developement of what should be merely

a wider circle of the same great principle—mutual restraint and forbearance, in order that a greater degree of common liberty or benefit may be enjoyed by all. Let the relations between husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant, guardian and ward, be maintained in conformity with principles of pure morality, with a spirit of reciprocal obligation, and all that nice dependance of the various parts upon each other, which constitutes the perfection of the social system. Man must learn to obey, before he is suited to command; and we may rest assured, that civil liberty itself will always be best understood, best practised, and enjoyed with superior zest, by those who have early learnt to bridle their passions, and to obey with instinctive promptitude the duties of domestic life. When men, in their early years, have passed through a period of moral discipline, they are aware of its advantages in mature manhood; and knowing from superior reflection the consequences of violence of any kind, they are disposed to check it in others. In a village of Scotland, for example, uncontaminated by pernicious example, the inhabitants long accustomed to order, definite duties, and reciprocal obligations, would probably continue in their accustomed course, enjoying as much real liberty as ever yet has been the lot of mankind, though an entire revolution should happen in London, the executive government be at an end, and no existing authority responsible for the immediate actions of subordinate agents. The natural dependence of all parts of the social machine would

preserve their order: children would continue docile, servants obedient, and in the emergency an instinctive feeling would display itself amongst all the inhabitants, without a magistrate, a constable, still less a soldier or rude instrument of force, to consult the wisest heads in the vicinage as to the definite line of action. In a similar village in France, were the executive authority to cease, all would be anarchy and tumult; the women would be writing political letters, the children unruly, and anticipating the excitement of some bloody scene with unnatural joy, and every servant would consider himself quite as competent to decide in respect to proper proceedings as his master; indeed many would consider their talents quite adequate to direct the helm of state in the surrounding storm. In this case, amid the deafening sounds of political rights, force, strong physical force, would be required to keep the people in reasonable subjection; the materials for gratuitous obedience are unknown; and, indeed, a magistrate or civil functionary of any kind, attempting to control disorder, would be openly ridiculed. No! when once the moral spirit is destroyed, high civilization only heightens the public deformity, and amongst such a people liberty and the bayonet go hand in hand together. Under this contrast is it difficult to speculate on final consequences? Order and genuine freedom may exist in the one country for ages, every generation, in truth, giving fresh roots to the emblematic tree, and enabling it to bear its blossoms with undiminished

vigour and beauty. The other will inevitably behold her boasted hopes end under the dominion of one man, who issues his mandates with an obdurate heart, and executes them with an iron hand. The whole of the moderate, the comparatively feeble, and also those possessed of property, acquiesce in this single rule, as preferable to the domination of many. Such most probably will be the fate of France, from the defects in the foundation stone of freedom, from the want of a virtuous social system. A second Roman Empire, it is to be feared, will ere long appear, devoid of the external power, but possessing all the internal corruption. Prophecies are, no doubt, dangerous, but unless the social system, even of America, be altered, and strict discipline prevail in important relations of life, now lax in the extreme, she will find a woeful difference in her vaunted liberty, when her territory is fully peopled, and comprehensive laws are required to restrain the acts of those unpossessed of property. The wealthy, for the security of order, will then be ready to strengthen, indeed to frame, a new executive, to preserve their possessions from violent aggression.

While such are the prospects abroad, England may yet retrieve her falling fortunes, and emerge from the dangers by which she is surrounded, by the comparative excellence of her social system, though susceptible of much higher improvement. The existing period, few will dispute, is pregnant with alarm, but still every danger may be surmounted, if the

virtuous permit not passive indifference to public matters to influence their conduct, but stand boldly forward, notwithstanding trouble, abuse, or obloquy, and thus stamp the impress of the nation's genuine character upon public proceedings. At present, when that much abused term the people is heard in political discussion, it frequently is to be interpreted as excluding the moderate, the industrious, and the virtuous amongst the artisans, as well as those possessed of property. Let agitators of every kind be undeceived, and let all conspicuous for moral worth shake off their lethargy, in order that reason and virtue in public proceedings may resume their ascendency. Passive neutrality at the present time is peculiarly censurable. Every real patriot should enter the political arena to strengthen the enlightened legislator in enacting important measures, which sometimes are of most difficult accomplishment, unless there be strong encouragement from without to sway the popular opinion. The British people may rest assured that, for many years to come, it will be wise to confine their attention to practical legislation affecting the business of life, not only as the most immediately desirable, but as the surest and speediest mode of effecting a settlement of many abstract questions of political rights, which seem now in fashion. They do deceive, very greatly deceive themselves, if they imagine that their present constitution is even a near approach to a perfect form of government, compared to what will be hereafter discovered. But, rudely

constructed as it is, it will perform all requisite functions for one or two generations. If prosperity again appear, ere that time elapses, there will be great change, and probably efforts will be made to procure, in public assemblies, the representation of mind—a very different question from the representation of either property or numbers.

THE END.

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